

EVERY WEEK

JAN. 17, 1925

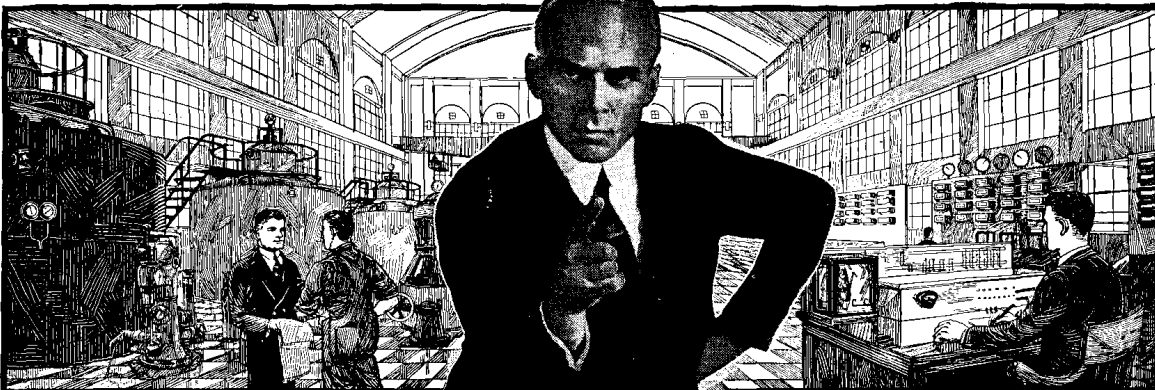
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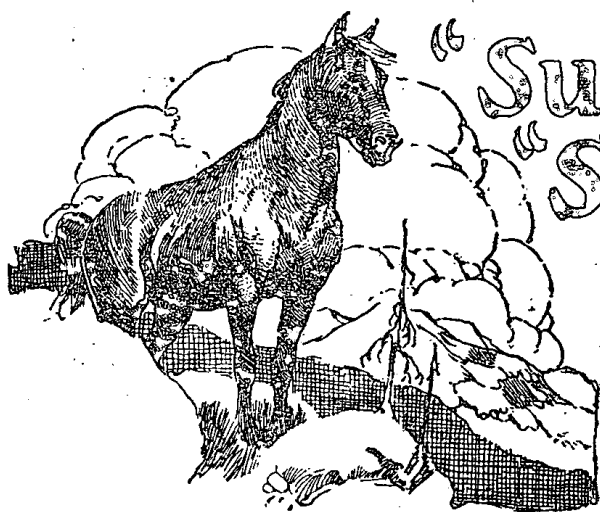
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Vol. XLIX

JANUARY 17, 1925

No. 2



"Sunshine" by "Sunnymoat"

by
George Gilbert

Author of "Roped from Folly,"

CHAPTER I.

WRECKED.

HITCHED to the rear of the blind baggage express, insured for as much as nearly all the other contents of the train, the stable car of the Sunnymoat stock farms rolled its luxurious way toward the sunrise. Fresh from triumphs on the coast, the darlings of the race followers were now going East to take up the work laid out for them at Saratoga, Belle Meade, Latonia, Belmont, and other noted tracks.

Chewing contentedly at his hay, the great Sunnymoat himself, head of the

great stable's stud, heard the voice of his caretaker, Sam Jackson, saddle-hued and bright-eyed.

"Findin' your hay good this mornin'?"

The great stallion whickered gently.

The roar of the train's going was a steady composite of sounds that the ear was accustomed to, so the voice and the equine reply were to be heard. It was just coming dawn outside. Presently Sam would give the big stallion with the ruddy coat and two white socks behind, his morning drink, hay, and a bit of salt and tobacco and then his rub-down, first of many ministrations due to high rank, breeding, and forthright courage.

Sam picked up the water pail and

swung it tentatively. The king of horses coaxed for his drink. Sam peeped out at the grated window and thus addressed the waiting stallion.

"If you was out in the sandhills near this yeah spot, you'd lack a lot o' water, Sunny. This country's made up of what God had left over and threw away when hell was finished."

Inside the car all was comfortable. The electric fans, the filtered water, the dustless hay and splendid grain, made it a traveling equine paradise. The horses, accustomed to ride in the car, where they had passed so many peaceful hours, stood the hurried journeys well.

Sam dallied over the water, then went to the car door and opened it. The inrush of cool, alkali-tainted desert air and dust displeased him. He inched the door almost shut. Sam wanted a smoke, and he knew better than to let the interior of the car become reeking with tobacco vapor. Yates Gregory, the stable's head trainer, would be in soon, from the Pullman ahead, that was taken along for the jockeys, trainers, and handlers and for Willis Gillian, owner of the Sunnymoat stables, who often traveled along with his horses. And if Yates Gregory found the odor of cigarette smoke in that car—zowie!

Sam lighted the cigarette and puffed a few times, sending the smoke out the door. He carefully bunted the cigarette from between thumb and forefinger and saw it sail out into the open and whip back out of view. Sam caught, over his shoulder, a glimpse of the big stallion, coaxing for his water, and his heart smote him for his negligence. He went to give the king of horses his morning sup and then—

The earth trembled! The grind of brakes, the bouncing of cars braked down to a slithering skid, the howl of the whistle, then— A terrific shock, as the train went over on its side and stopped, dead, every bit of material in

each and every car giving forth some sort of hideous noise as motion was ended. Then the hissing of steam was heard, and the leaping of flames came to add to the horror.

The train crew and the stables force together raced for the stable car to get out the frenzied horses, if possible. Their shrill calls—the most terrible of all animal sounds is that of the horse when in agony of body or spirit and in the last extremity—struck terror into hearts to which terror was a stranger ordinarily. The stable car had lurched back till it was not on its side, but with one set of wheels buried in the sand, was at an angle of about forty-five degrees. The door was open, too, partly.

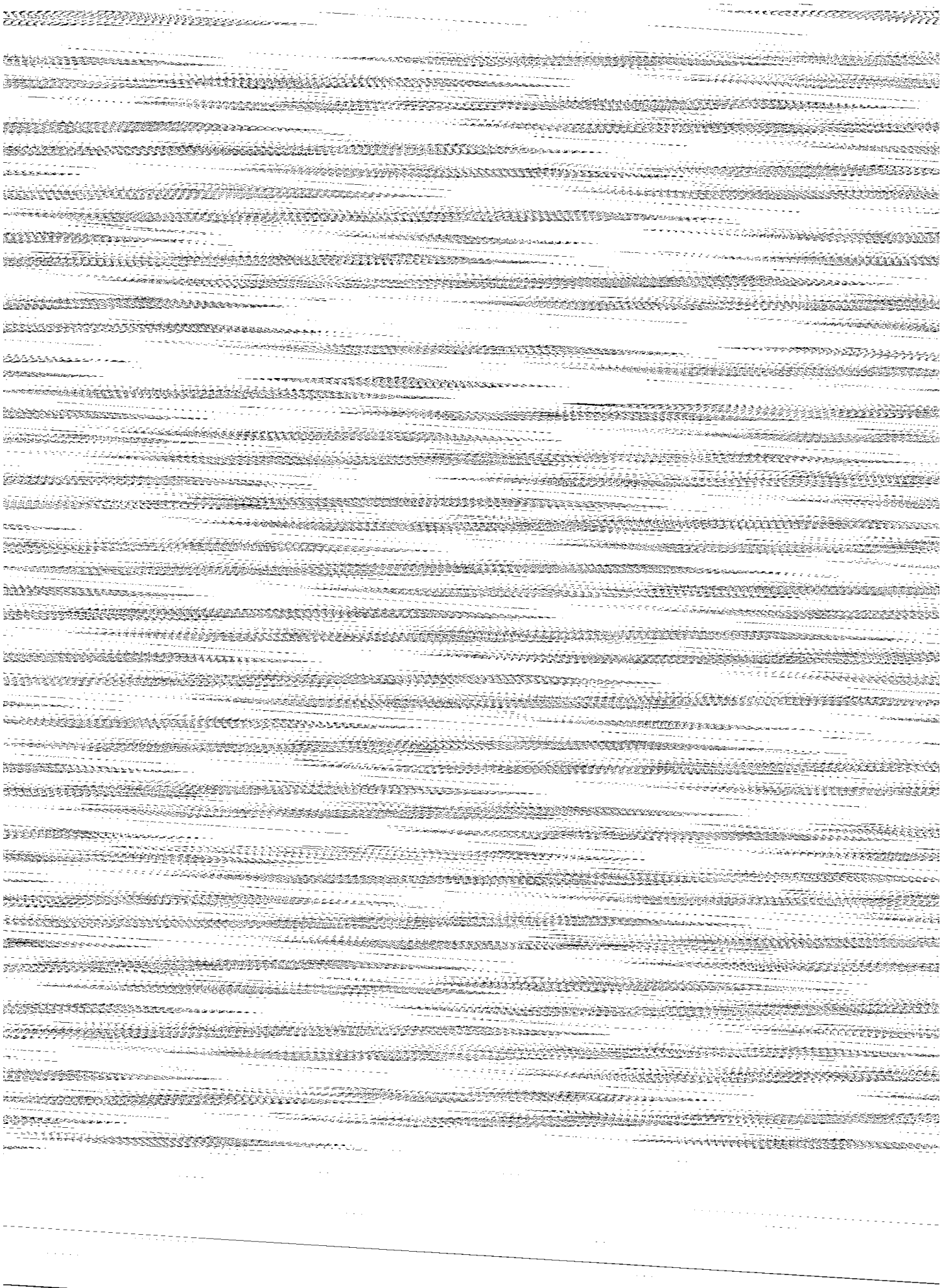
As the first man approached the door he could hear Sam Jackson's moans. The door was flung open to the full, and he started to enter, but an equine thunderbolt leaped over him.

The king of horses, the great Sunnymoat, was at large!

"Get a horse free, if we can, and some one ride after him; he's worth all the rest put together." Yates Gregory yelled the order as he dashed for the car.

Ahead the train crew was fighting the fire now. With steam from the engine, conveyed in a hose, they were getting the better of it. The engine was on the tracks; the wreck had been caused by a truck on an express car jumping the track and thus jackknifing the train two cars behind the engine. The first car wrecked had started to burn. The engine and the first two cars had been jerked loose from the wreck. They found Sam unconscious from a wound in the head. Several minor horses in the string were hurt; one would have to be destroyed.

"Whew; we got out of it lucky, if we can only catch old Sunny," Yates Gregory gave his judgment of the condition of things. "Let's get right onto his tracks; he's always a good-natured



"All right; I love you, Billy Keever." and she swung down and ran toward the house.

"I wonder what she ran for; she looked scared," Keever said to Bert Lyle, one of his helpers.

"She did, that's so," Lyle agreed, and then their horses all whipped their ears down the trail. Other men were coming. The girl, on her fence-rail coign of vantage, had seen them at the lower turn of the lifting trail and had had time to go before they had arrived at a point where the first party's horses could scent them and give the warning of pointed ears first, then the warning of concerted nickerings.

"Bart Upson!" Lyle let out explosively.

"Tryin' t' cut us out again."

"That's it." Lyle agreed with his leader's judgment.

"Sure; hornin' in where he ain't wanted," Herm Dunn, the second of Keever's men, spoke softly.

The three loosened their guns and drew off to one side of the watering trough. It was to be the last good drink the horses would have for a long time. Sunset would find them far into the dry lands, of which the McNulty place was the stepping stone. They would then have to depend upon water more or less gyped, most of it altogether vile. Men and beasts had filled up to the limit on this sweet, clear water, and every canteen was full of it, too.

"I wonder if he got word that the Lady's been seen near Railroad Cut?" Billy asked.

"You never can tell; Mike, the Pap might've leaked to him, same as to us," Dunn spoke up.

"That's so; the Papago's tongue will waggle when he's a few under his belt," Lyle said.

"Well, we got as good a chance t' rope that pretty mare as he has; it's an open field, and no favors," Keever told

them, as the other cavalcade rounded the lower turn and swept up to the watering place.

Bart Upson darted a keen glance at Keever as he let his horse nuzzle up to the eyes in the big trough.

"Thought I might get a start on you after the Lady," he said laughingly. His face was broad and well colored; his mustache was black and well trimmed. He was a fine-built man, dressed with the due respect for the work before him—that of horse catching. The two were rival wild-horse outfits. Clashes over minor issues in their odd trade had already created a tense feeling between them. Keever's crowd had had the best of all exchanges of "courtesies" so far. Upson, unaccustomed to being crossed, already nursed a savage hatred for the younger man, but so far had managed to conceal it behind a mask of bluff raillery and chaff. Keever had been off to the south for weeks and had not been where he would hear recent news of the upper country until he had met the redskin renegade who had given him the tip on the Lady.

"You're even with us now," Keever had to admit.

"You bet," answered the other, chuckling and putting his horse forward to make room for the extra and pack horses of his own string. Dodge Seltzer and Ace Vraine, Upson's pals, urged the extra horses and packers forward and they drank gratefully. Canteens were filled. They wheeled and started for the trail. Keever, by a sign, held his men back. The quest for the beautiful line-back bay mare that each band of horse hunters sought, was important, but Keever knew better than to put his own horses into the discard by reckless rushing for an hour's advantage at the very edge of the dry lands. The big bay mare, desert born and desert bred, was a prize worth any man's effort—one not lightly to be thrown

away through too much eagerness at the beginning of a long chase. The race would be to the crafty, not to the swift!

Helen McNulty came running out, waving something white. She drew back upon seeing Bart Upson, who roared something at her that frightened her into bolting indoors again. It was not what the man had roared at the slip of a girl, but the way he had acted and smacked his big lips that angered Keever, who drove his horse forward to block Upson's progress. Bart drew down his black stallion till it was on its haunches and snarled out:

"What's this for?"

"You keep your tongue off that little gal; she's on'y a kid."

"She won't be a kid always—an' she's got t' learn——"

"She needn't learn from you, Bart Upson. She'd learn nothin' but devilry from you."

Upson laughed evilly and tossed his head back. "All right; have it your way; I've got business to attend to, if you've got none," and he worked his horse carefully past Keever's, spoke to his men quietly, and rode off without a backward glance.

"I thought the break was comin' then, boss," Lyle said, and Keever noted that his right hand was over on the left side of his saddle horn, where his .45 was, butt to the front.

"He didn't dare," Herm Dunn said, whipping his left hand from his left hip. Each had his own method of drawing; each was fast, but Keever was known to be lightning.

"Upson would dare, in a pinch; get him right," Keever told them. "He's not a coward, but he likes to start a fight with the aidge in his favor if he can."

"Billy Keever, is he gone?" Helen called from the doorway.

"You bet, sweetness," answered Keever heartily.

"Then I'll come; dad's asleep—drunk yet from las' night. He brought this

paper from the Bend an' I read all about the wreck that let that big racing hoss out into the desert. Big rewards out, lots more than you'd get for the Splendid Lady." She yelled excitedly as she sped toward them, waving the paper. The horses shied at this, but stilled at a word of command.

The girl passed the paper up to Keever and the other two worked their horses over so they could look on, on either side, where he read of the escape of the great stallion, Sunnymoat, following the wreck. He read of the stallion's mad flight into the outlands, and of the big rewards for him.

"That's why Mike, the Pap told us that story of having seen the Splendid Lady at Railroad Cut," Keever almost shouted. "The paper says this runaway stallion's been seen near Black Cañon. Scheme to draw us offside."

The others nodded agreement. Helen looked up at them admiringly.

"Bart Upson had him feed us that rubbish, so that we'd go off on that blind chase, while he got after that stallion and the big reward," Keever summed it up, and again they nodded.

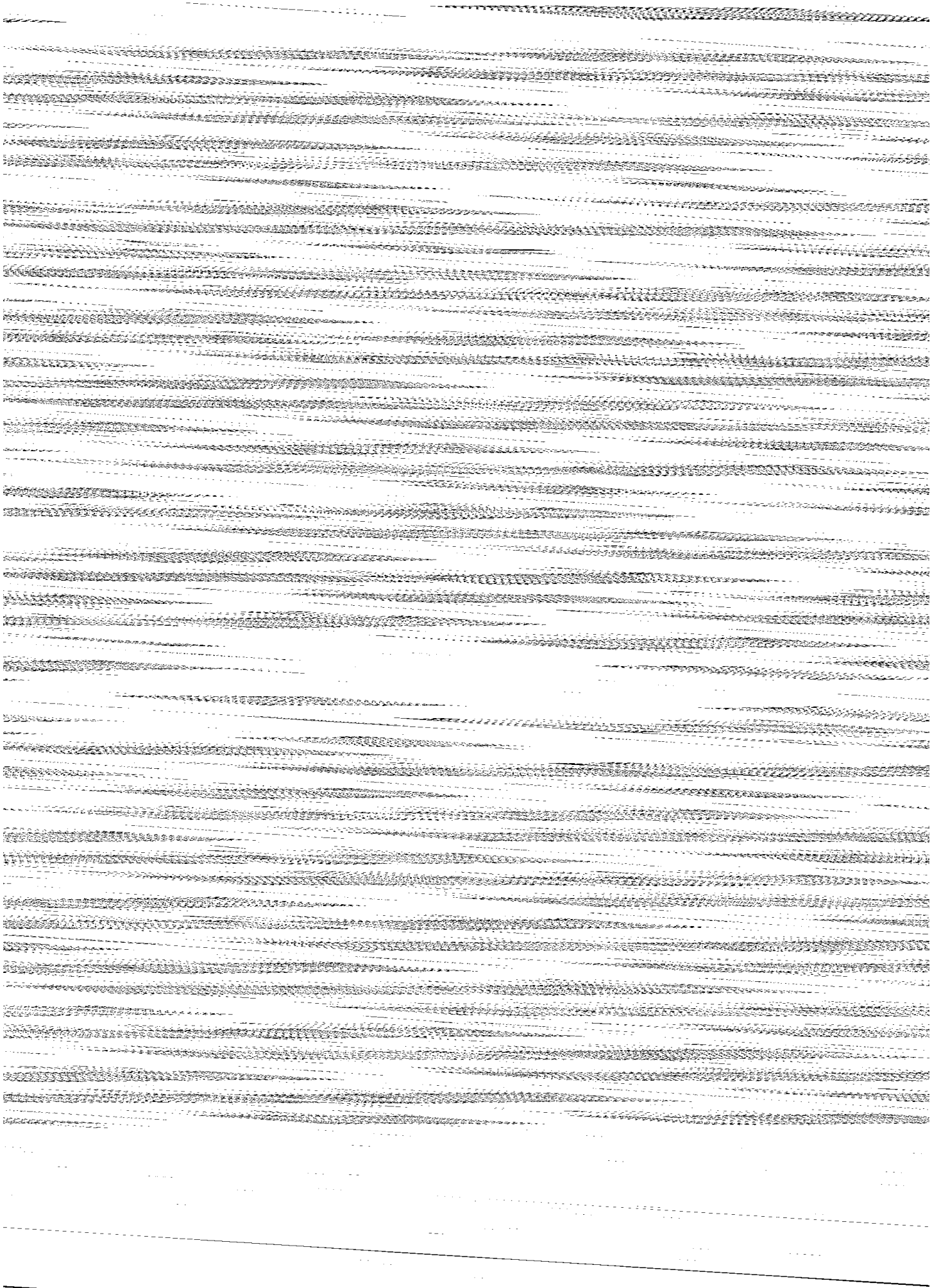
"And but for the little lady here, we'd been dished out of a chance to get the big stallion," Keever reminded them. "If we win the reward, we'll give her ten per cent, eh, boys?"

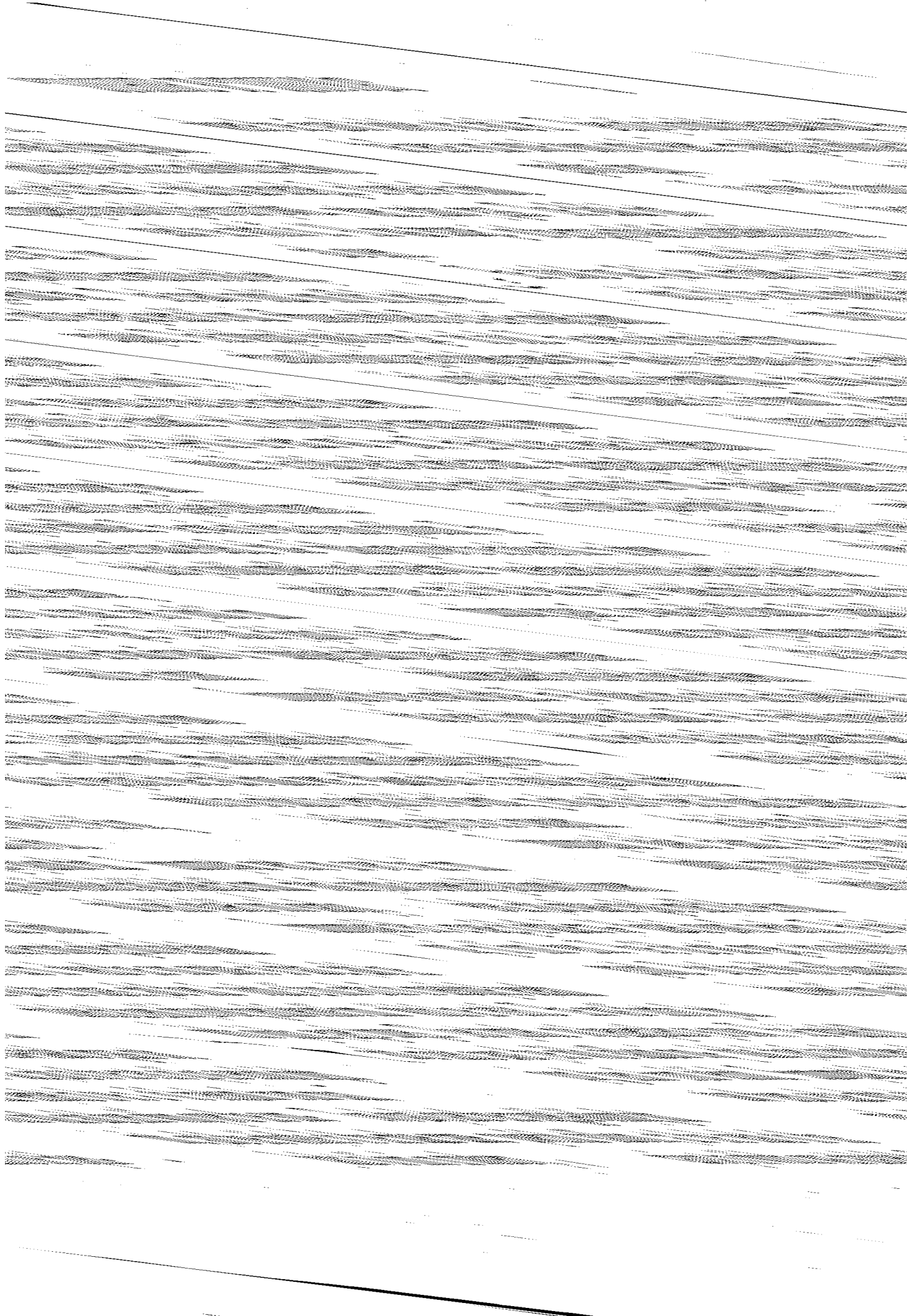
"Sure—her! But not a cent to her dad," Dunn growled out.

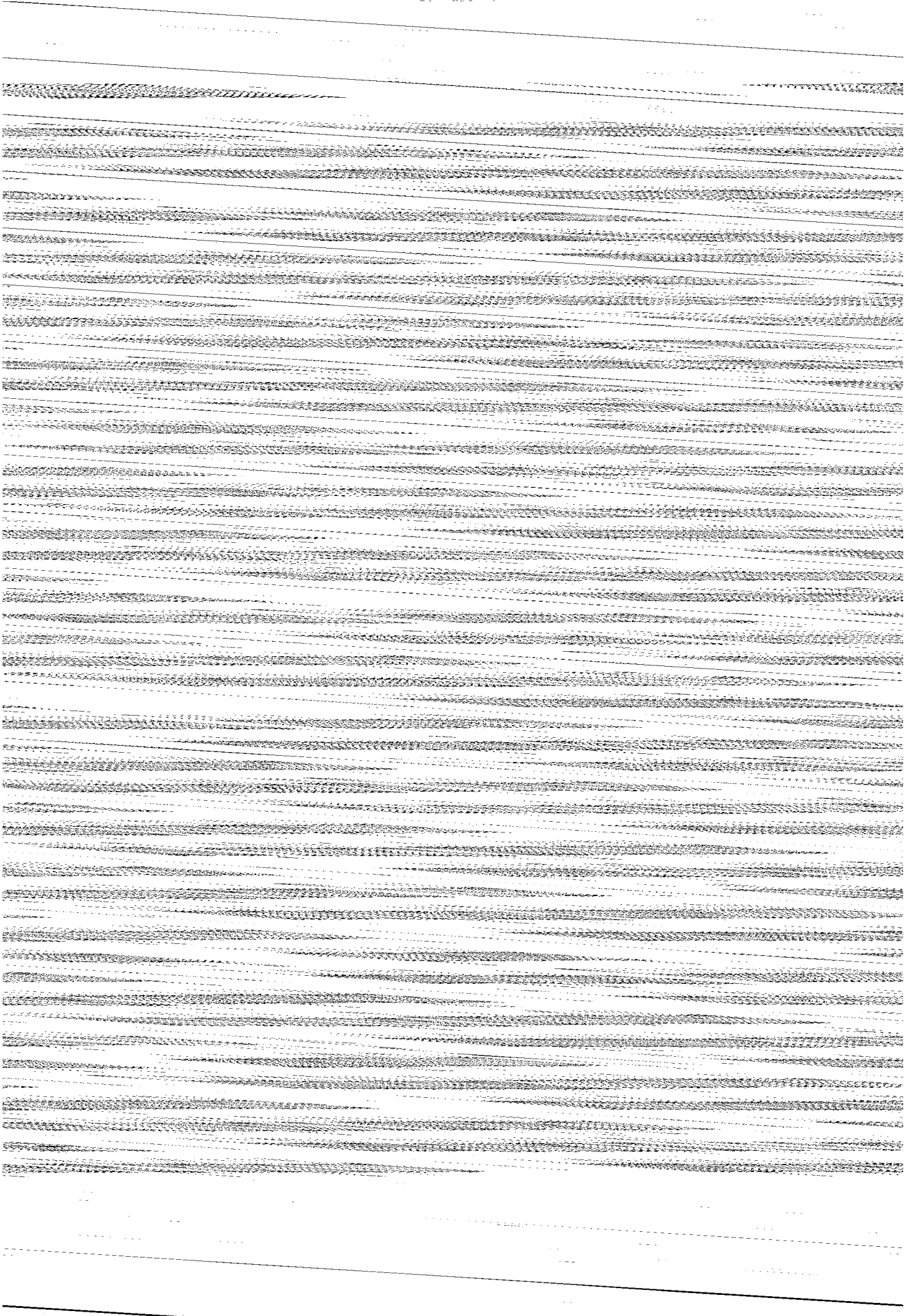
"Don't blame dad too much, boys," Helen said. She was a good girl, having drudged for the man who had gone to the bad since his wife had died three years before, leaving him the young girl to care for as best he could.

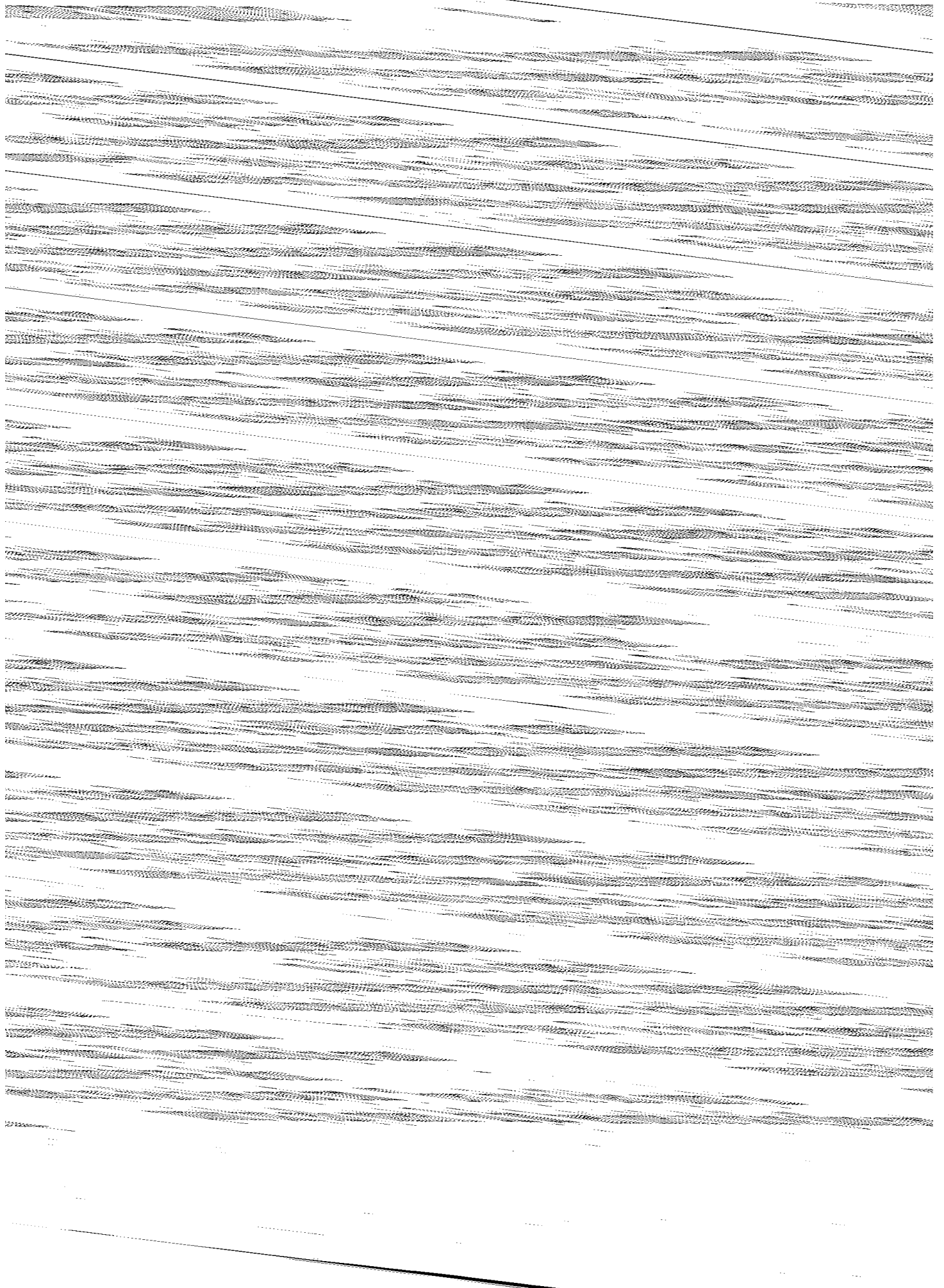
"That's so," Bert Lyle soothed her, leaning over to stroke her auburn hair that hung in curls all about her well-poised head.

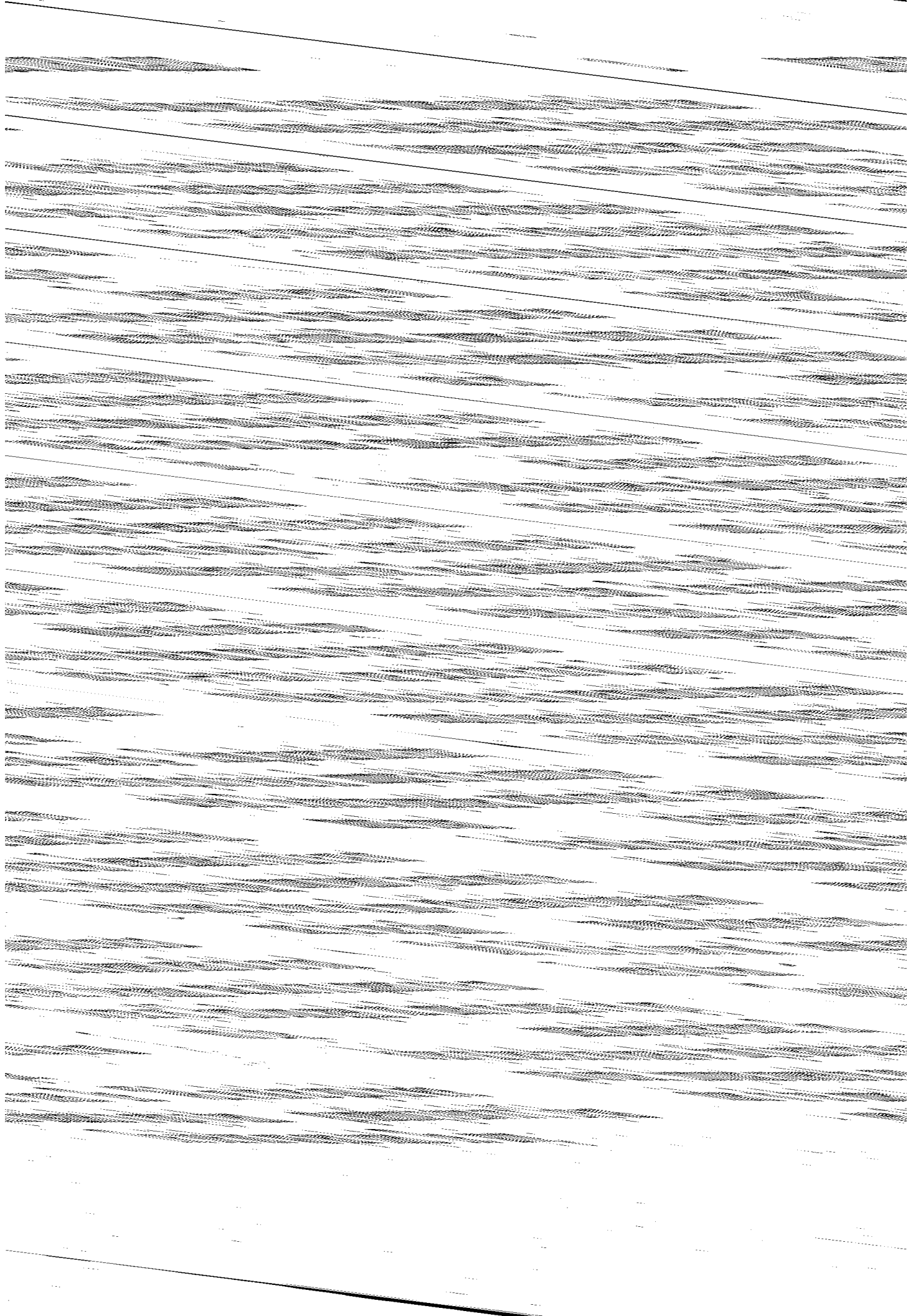
"Better luck, and maybe your dad'll do better, Helen; just keep straight and good and you'll come out all right. Does Bart Upson frighten you?"











"Yes, if we get him to the railroad without killing him," Dunn said gloomily.

Keeper did not speak. But he was thinking: "Him and her—both of the royal strain of horseflesh. I'd like t' have her next colt—and I'm going t' have it!"

"Don't tell any one, when we get t' Twin Tanks with the big cavvy," Keeper requested, "that Sunnymoat was with the Splendid Lady, or just where we caught him, either."

"Don't want folks t' know that she ranges in this part o' the country, I suppose?" Lyle said as Dunn grunted a stingy agreement to Keeper's request. Keeper only smiled.

CHAPTER V.

THE REWARD OF MERIT.

SAM JACKSON and Yates Gregory, at Twin Tanks, desert point of strategic importance in the campaign for the recapture of Sunnymoat, waited, almost without hope. Gregory, who had overseen the training of the stallion from colthood, could not bear to leave without him. Willis Gillian, his owner, had been called away by imperative business, for his activities were many.

The loyal negro was the first to spy the cavalcade coming up from the north side of the rails. The two were under the corrugated iron gallery of the Twin Tanks House. Their chairs came down on all fours with a bang and Sam, shouting wildly, pointed to the open country, where three mounted men, leading several horses, were coming at a slow jog. Yates, accustomed to have horse-hunting groups come in, had lost hope that this one might be the important company. Sam, however, knew the king, even though his coat were shaggy, his mane and forelock and tail filled with burs and cockles. Not to be restrained, he met the horses halfway, shouting:

"For de land sakes! What a job I'se a-gwine t' have com'in' the buzz outen yor tail!"

Yates, more phlegmatic, looked the big stallion over carefully.

"Sound in wind and limb?" he asked the bronzed leader of the successful expedition.

"Surest thing," answered Keeper, quietly elated.

"You've made good; who'll I make the check out to?"

"W. P. Keeper."

An hour later, the good check tucked in his pocket, Keeper and his men rode for Keeper's home, a small homestead place about two miles out of Encinal. Here Keeper had his horse corral and kept his outfit. His men lived near by.

"This five thousand dollars goes like this," Billy told them, although there had been no agreement that they were to receive anything more than wages. "You each get a thousand, and I take the rest."

The two were delighted with this outcome. Billy modified the plan by saying:

"The news that Helen McNulty gave us didn't exactly lead to catching the stallion, but it did point to Black Cañon, and if it hadn't been for it, we'd wasted time around Railroad Cut and might've got turned in some other direction and been thrown clean off scent. I'm putting in two hundred and fifty dollars as her share."

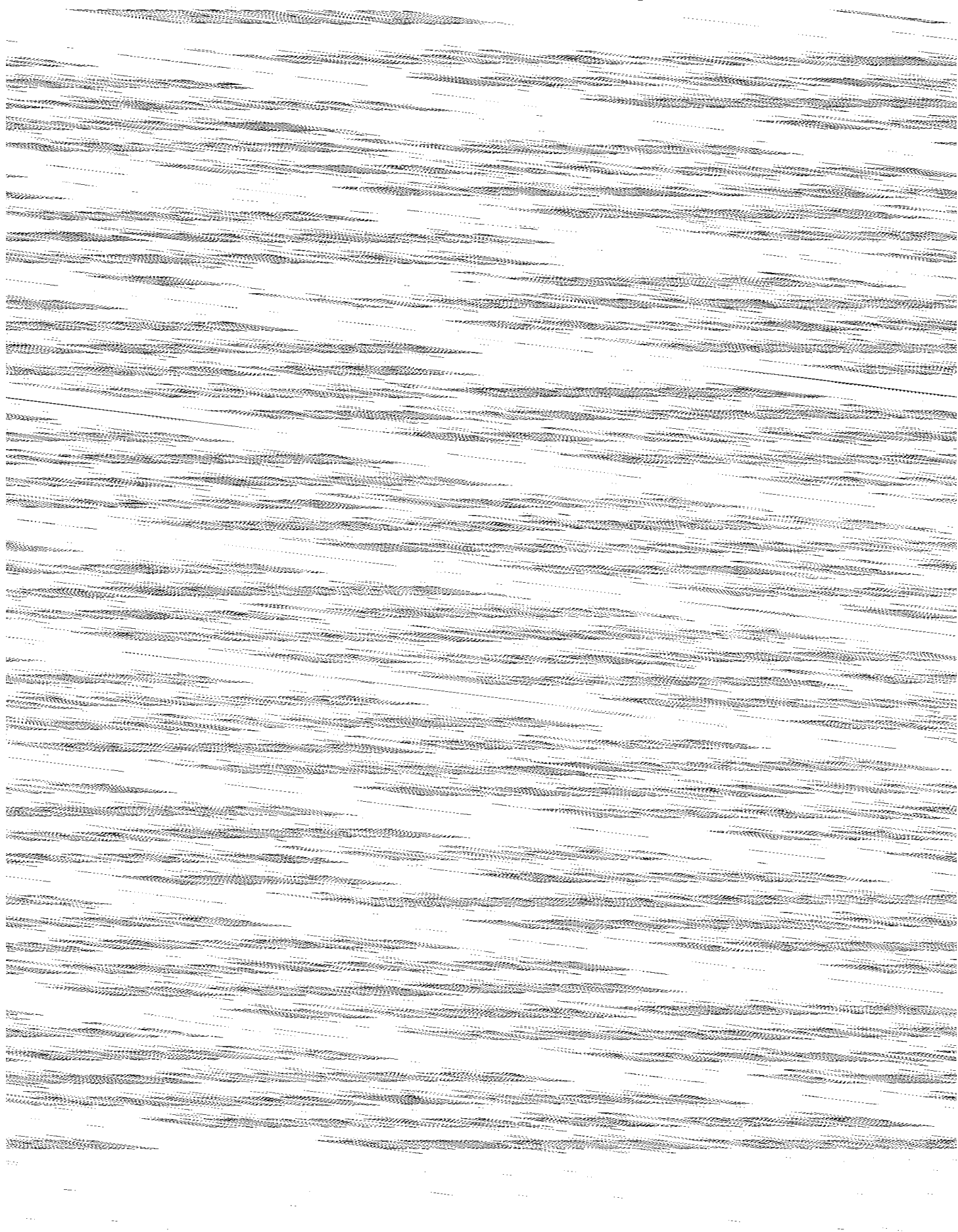
"We'll go one hundred and twenty-five dollars each," Lyle said.

Herm Dunn agreed.

"We'll stop on the way back and tell her; we'll want a drink of that good water," Keeper told them. "But we'll have to find some way so that her sot of a father won't get hold of the money."

"That's so," Lyle agreed.

On the corral bars, Helen McNulty waited, hopefully. She knew that on



the scoundrel were about to say something to draw his attention elsewhere, when the door was swung open.

Al McNulty, Helen's father, stood on the threshold!

Bart laughed and said venomously: "I'm giving her a lesson in——"

"You're giving her one lesson too many," came the unexpected answer.

Bart stared at the man. His eyes were sunken, but his face showed less signs of liquor than he ever had seen on it.

"I'm half sober, for a wonder," McNulty spoke, almost tonelessly. "I've stood for your bluster and evil ways because I was mad for liquor. I've taken a dislike to the stuff. I went to town last night to drink. I couldn't force it down. I kept seeing my dead wife's eyes. I kept hearing my girl's voice. I came home to tell her I was through with liquor. I may be on the aidge o' the tremors. Well, let me be, but I'm through with drink."

Bart Upson threw back his head to laugh. Helen sank onto the table, her face in her hands, tears of joy trickling through her fingers. Her father saw the cut in the thin dress, the shaking shoulders, the attitude of gratitude of the child who had been so loyal to him. He saw the weal through the slit in the calico dress. He saw the drop of crimson falling from the lash of the quirt.

And McNulty saw red!

The girl, face covered, saw nothing.

Detonations shook the room; smoke filled it. The girl opened her eyes.

Her father was falling forward, coughing horribly. He struck the floor with a loud bang and was still. His gun, smoking, was in his clenched hand. Bart Upson, upright, was shoving his gun back into his holster. His face was a mask of fury.

"You seen how it was," he said to the other two. "He drew an' made me do it."

They nodded. Ace Vraine jerked his thumb toward the girl: "She'll tell."

"No, by the devil she won't," and Bart turned upon her.

There came a clatter of hoofs outside, and hails. "Ho, the house—Helen!"

"Billy Keever!" the girl called, leaping for the door. They tried to stop her, but she was through it like a scudding fox, calling: "Billy Keever!"

Bart Upson laughed heavily, his face pasty white now.

"Let me talk, an' you back up my talk; he tried t' draw; it was him or me," he adjured them. They nodded, and all went out together.—

The girl was clinging to Keever's stirrup, looking up at his face and talking excitedly.

"That's enough, Helen," Keever told her. "Get off t' one side, pronto."

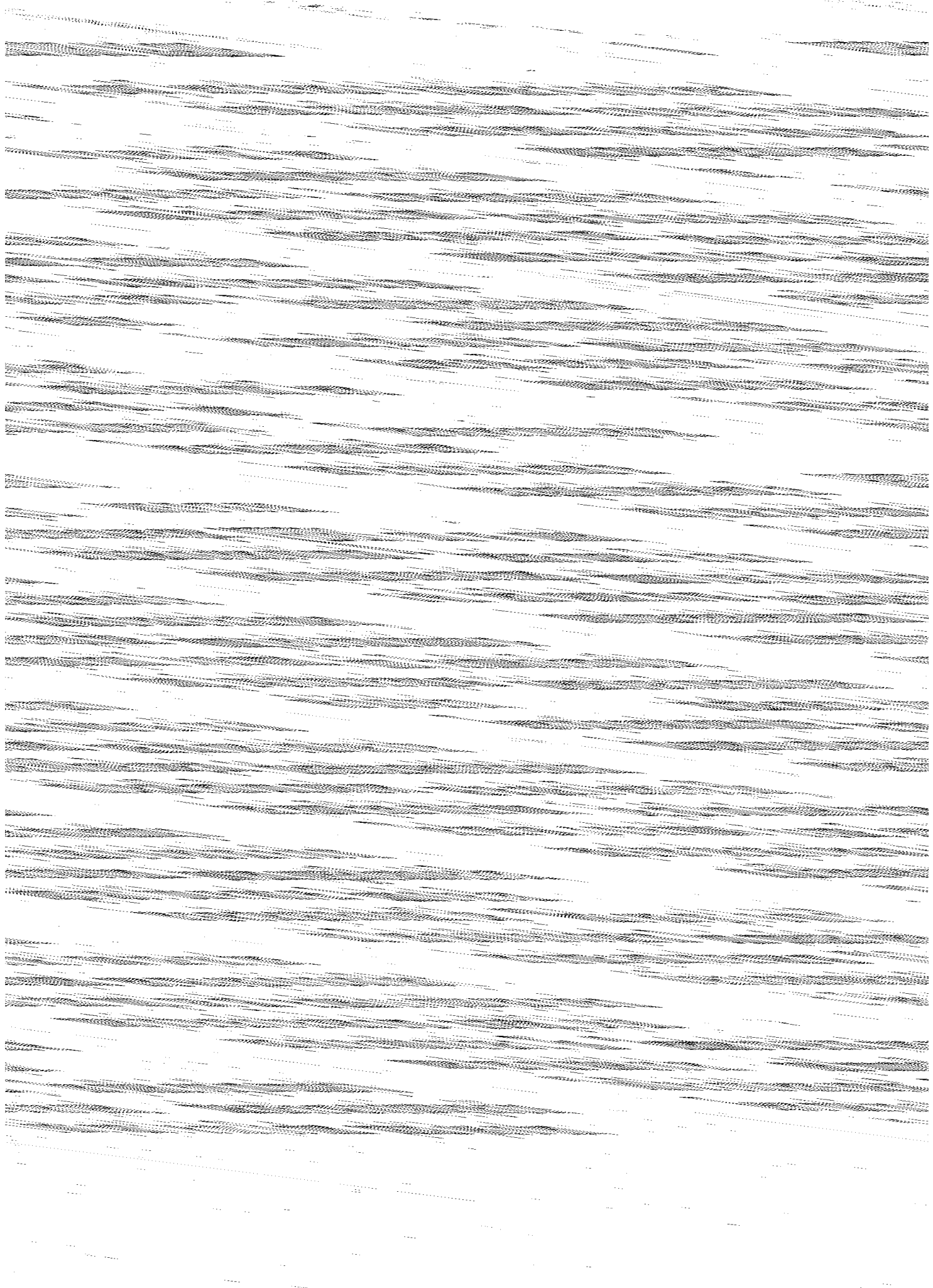
The girl scuttled aside and watched. Keever held the gaze of Bart Upson steadily, and began to walk his horse toward him. His men shifted a bit in their saddles.

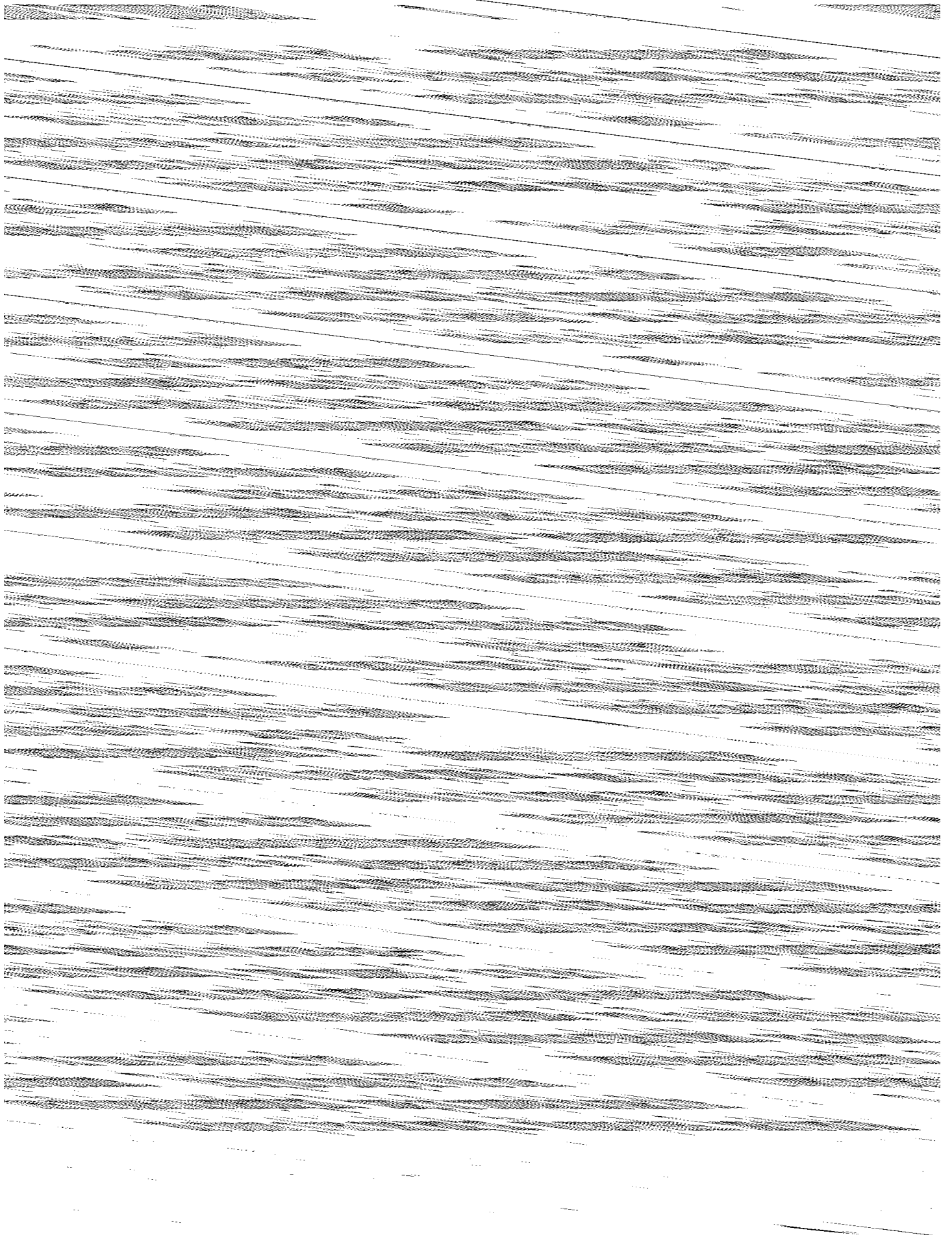
"Stick 'em high," Keever ordered, his guns leaping out to beat the slower draw of his foe. Bart did not dare shoot, for the other's guns were out before his own had begun to show from the holster. His men did not show a sign of fight.

Two hours later, with Al McNulty buried, the girl, her three friends, and the prisoners, arrived in Encinal Bend, so named because there was a grove of encinal oaks in a bend of the creek there, making it a good place for picnics and barbecues and tournaments. Bart Upson and his pals were turned over to Sheriff Bascombe, charged with the slaying of Al Upson. Keever turned over their guns, and their horses were put into the town corral.

Helen, questioned, could only tell that she did not see the fight begun. She had been quirted, her father had appeared to defend her, and there had been a fight.

"Ought t' lynch them for quirting the





moved far off into the desert, to quarters usually used by them in winter only. Other bands worked to east or west, into other ranges for a time. Gradually, as the excitement over the king subsided, they began to drift back. Then Keever and his friends made some fair hauls of commoner range stock. These would pay expenses for a while.

Touching at the home ranch from time to time, taking on "breaking" contracts for ranches that wanted saddle stock gentled, Billy and his men were kept busy. The finer horses that they broke for near-by outfits were really gentled—handled with an eye to bringing out their better qualities and starting them on the road to become real cow horses. The offscourings were apt to be "busted wide open," and brought into subjection quickly and then sold off to horse traders whose conscience would permit of re-sale of those same ornery brutes as "saddle-broke an' easy on a man's pants."

During this time Keever found time to go off on long, lonely hunts by himself. As he was known by his men to be long-headed and often scouted out likely horse territory or discovered new ways to capture desired wild horses while on such solitary trips, his men thought little of it.

But Billy had an object in view. He was watching, afar, the Splendid Lady. He had not led his men after her in weeks and even months. Instead, he contented himself with watching her from afar.

The fine mare had joined, he found, the cavy of a black stallion of good points—a young herd master. Billy could tell, by studying her, that she was with the caviya, but not really part of it. She was in the status of the mare who takes up with a given band after her own mate has died or been captured, but who merely roams with those mares for company's sake. Another year, if the Splendid Lady remained with those

same companions, she would "belong." Now she was accepted, but it was to be noted that she usually grazed a bit off to one side, nor did the black herd master pay her that attention that he gave to his other subjects. Nor did she accept his attentions in good part. She made it plain that she was there because she wished company—that was all. These chance acquaintanceships, the result of the inexorable workings of fate, are accepted with equine philosophy. It was the season when the herd instinct is weakest, and when the Splendid Lady seemed to wander off by herself at times, she was not watched so jealously by the young black stallion as were his other mares.

It was on these lonely wanderings that Keever watched the splendid Lady closest. He had marked the black stallion's band as one that he would not chase that year, for he did not wish the Splendid Lady to be disturbed more than was necessary. When he found her going off by herself, Billy did not lose sight of her.

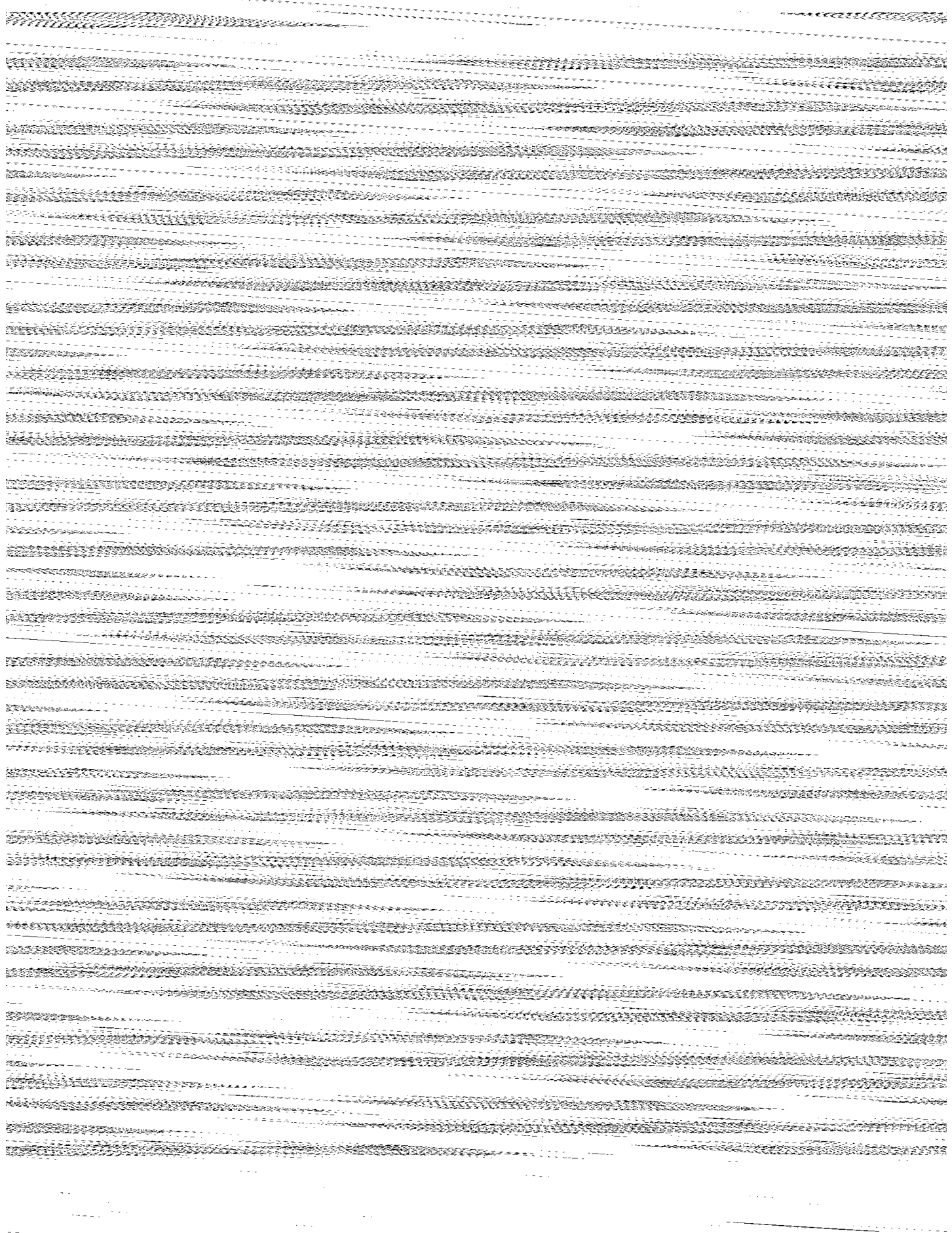
Billy's hopes were rising all this time. He looked forward to a certain event as the means of placing him in possession of a horse, that, given luck, the needed skill in handling and training, he would have assurance that his polo stock in the future would command top prices and be a source of both pleasure and profit.

CHAPTER VII.

"SUNSHINE."

L YING flat on a shelf of cliff, Billy Keever jammed his big binoculars to his eyes and watched the Splendid Lady as she came cautiously from behind a vine screen into the large cañon she had selected as her place of refuge for the great event of her yearly round.

Keever knew that behind the vine screen the beautiful mare had her colt cached. That was what he had waited for. That was why he did not want



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"Where's Helen?" he asked, sailing his hat up onto a set of antlers over the doorway and unbuckling his belt as he slumped down into an easy chair that Mrs. Potter always invited him to occupy upon his arrival.

"Be back pretty soon; goin' t' stay t' supper? Tin-can apple sass an' pork chops——"

"You cain't drive me from it no how a-tall, Ma Potter," he answered her plaintively.

"I ain't goin' t' try. Jus' be comfortable an' I'll rustle grub. Helen'll be in pretty soon. She's visiting some gal friends down the other end o' the town."

Keever nodded and smoked while he studied the latest most popular books—the widow's newest mail-order catalogues. The light failed; Keever sat there idly, glad to have nothing to do for once. Only the end of his center-fire cigar showed where he was. The widow had proposed that she light the lamp, but he had vetoed that, saying that he would sit in the dusk.

"Pleasant t' be out o' the bright lights once in a dawg's age," he had told her.

Odors of good home cooking pervaded the humble home. Keever found himself wondering if the Ranch of the Pear would ever have a loving genius to preside over it and turn it from a house into a home.

Then there came a scurry of feet, a smacking sound, Mrs. Potter's protest at rough handling when she had her "hands full of aiggs," and then Keever heard the girl come rocketing into the room where he was, calling as she came.

"Oh, Billy Keever. I'm so glad you've come; I love you, Billy Keever."

The next moment she had thrown her arms about Keever's neck.

"Billy Keever—what's the matter; you've pushed me away—oh——"

She stared at him as a match flared. He stared at her.

Her red hair was now done up

nicely; the hands that had been so rough and chapped were now well cared for. The thin calico dress that had slatted in the dry-land winds about her thin limbs had given place to a frilly white dress, and her stockings and shoes were beyond reproach.

"Helen," Billy said gravely, as the match went out against his tingling finger tips, "better not say that, that a way no more."

"Why—why not——" Her answering query came from the darkness.

"Wait!" And he struck another match. This time he set the match to the wick of the lamp, and then sat back in his chair again. She was still before him, having edged back to face him as he had returned to his seat.

"Now look at me," he said, shaking a lean, strong forefinger at her. "Listen."

"I like t' look at you an' listen," she pouted at him.

"It's been all right, you tellin' me that you love me, up to now, but you're getting t' be a big girl; you'll be goin' away t' school some day and comin' back an' marryin' some nice boy. You're almost a lady, an' we better not be so free an' easy in our talk from now on," he concluded, very serious indeed in face and voice and manner.

"I marry some nice boy! I won't, ever. I'll marry a man when I marry, a man with whiskers, even——"

Billy ran his hand over his well-stubbed chin.

"I might even marry Herm Dunn," she declaimed. "Or even Bert Lyle, or even——"

She turned and fled to the door; then she wrinkled her nose at him and whispered, but the whisper carried to his heart.

"All right, I won't say that I love you, Billy Keever, not any more, unless you ask me to, but I do, jus' the same, jus' the same——"

She was turning to flee again, when he called her back.

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They shook their heads.

Vraine bent over Upson, then said: "It's cases for him; we'll take care o' the body."

Keever walked out backward, his guns ready to answer anything Upson's friends might say. No one tried to stop him.

Keever at once reported to Sheriff Bascombe and told him the case, from end to end.

"You say he's daid?" Bascombe asked.

"I left him for daid. An' he's better that a way than in jail with you on the outside guardin' him," Keever shot out at the lax official.

"That's as a man thinks. Well, it seems like a case of self-defense. I ain't lookin' for trouble, Billy."

"You know where I can be found, if wanted; I'm goin' t' ride now."

"Adios," said the sheriff, starting toward the Diamond Cat.

Ten minutes later Billy was riding toward the Pear Ranch. He was sorry he had had to kill a man, as he thought, but glad whenever he thought of Helen.

"If she was three—four years older now—dawg-gone it, I ain't only twenty-five right now," he found himself saying.

Then came another thought. "By and by she'll meet up with a nice kid, her own aige an' then she'll nacherally take t' him, not to an old-timer like me."

He rubbed that place on his stubbled chin where her lips had been pressed, and he sighed.

CHAPTER X.

UPSON LIVES—AND HATES.

IN the little back room of the Diamond Cat, Vraine and Seltzer watched over their chief, Upson. He was barely alive. Doctor Wilson, who had just left, had said that the wounded man might recover.

Bascombe looked over the hole in the

back of the man's coat, at the armpit, and asked a few questions.

"Keever t' blame?" he asked several who were in the room.

Upson, on the rude couch they had made from boxes and blankets, stirred, then rasped out: "Never mind that. I ain't making any complaint. We fought an' I got plugged. I'm goin' t' get well an' finish him."

"Better keep away from him; he might get you the third time, as he has the first two," the sheriff reminded him.

"This time he won't get me; I'm goin' t' break him by inches, heart and soul, and then I'll kill him afterward."

He fell back exhausted, his face writhed with a hatred implacable as it was deep.

CHAPTER XI.

SUNSHINE GROWS.

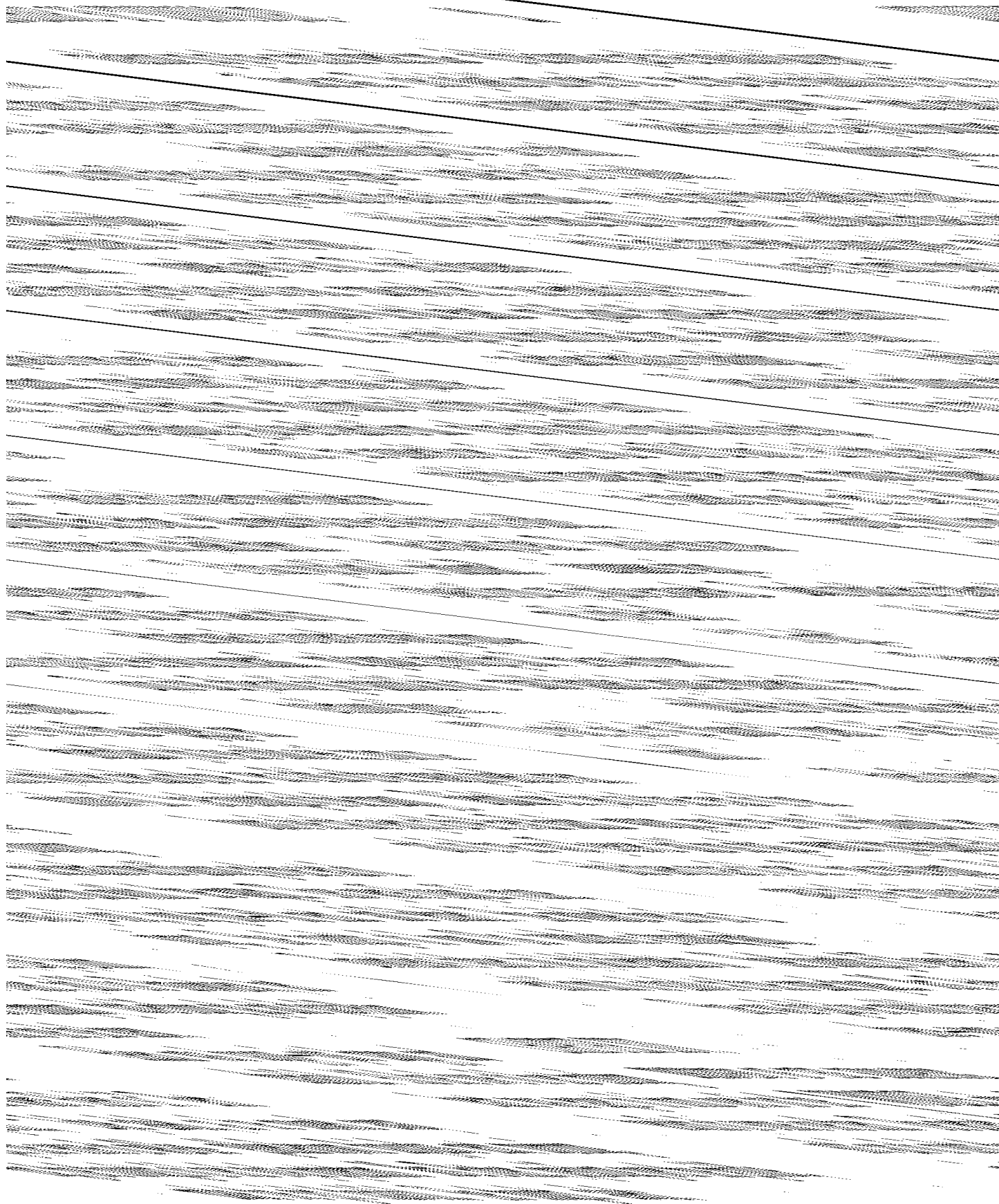
AT the Pear, Billy found everything going well. His first spare hours were given up to getting better acquainted with the colt, Sunshine, now well on his feet and bobbing about the special enclosure that he shared with his foster mother. Keever noted with delight the deepening of the color marks that proved his royal paternity. Already the colt was full of pretty tricks and inclined to be friendly.

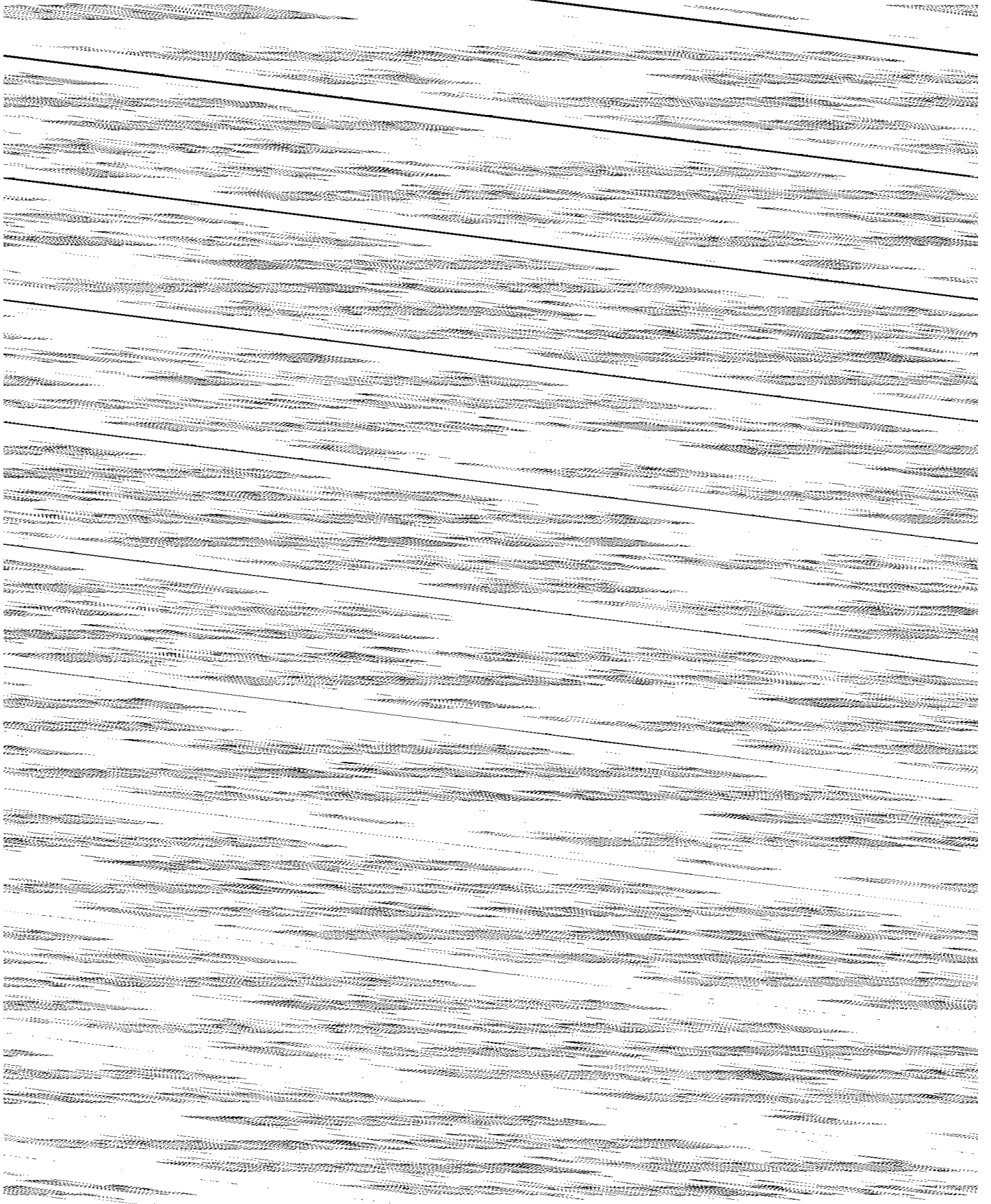
"We ain't goin' to make a pet hoss out of him," Keever told them. "These pet hosses are all right till you forget some day an' let them get a hold of you by the slack o' the pants or cheek and then you wish you had brought them up with some sense in their fool haid. An' don't teach him no foxy tricks. Might let him shake hands or bob his haid 'yes' or shake it for 'no,' but these lady tricks that foolish men teach hosses make them everybody's hoss, because every one wants t' make them do their batch o' tricks and they get t' know every one and that makes them out a plumb fool, entire."

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pressed them so hard they haven't had time t' stop. They won't do any harm t' Helen. They'll probably ask ransom; it's some band of Mex raiders. Bet they don't even know what kind of a colt they've stolen."

"Then why did they pick him out o' all the colts on the Pear, an' why is that colt ahaid of us able t' keep up this gait all day; he must be an iron hoss a'ready," Herm Dunn put in.

Ols Brownlew said nothing. The loyal lad was weary, but grimly determined to show himself a man in action, if he was a boy in years.

"Look! There's a colt now!" and Lyle pointed.

A colt, weary and wabbly, was to be seen on a rise of land ahead. They spurred for it and came up to it. It was not Sunshine, but it was a colt of his age. It was just a common, wiry colt, leg-weary, exhausted.

The sign of the men they were after had split and raveled out, too, they found upon close inspection.

"Tricked!" Lyle exclaimed. "They must've switched to that wagon on that bald spot on the Twin Tanks Trail——"

"But the colt?" Dunn objected.

"Might've piled him into that wagon and——"

Ols Brownlew had given them the idea they needed. Now they turned about and started over the weary route again. But their horses were not equal to speed. They had been kept going all day with the fugitives, it seemed, just ahead. For once Herm and Bert, veterans that they were, had been outguessed in a game of trailin'. The three were practically afoot, sixty miles from where the trail had been split on them, and they groaned as they thought that they must ride slowly, camp somewhere, and then make slower and slower progress back to where they had lost the sign of the Twin Tanks Trail. And when they arrived there they would still have horses under them all but dead in their

tracks, horses with no lift of life to them, horses upheld by the stern will of their riders, not by the living blood and nerve of vital force yet unused!

CHAPTER XV.

EL MORRO.

WITH much jingle the band of El Morro came over the last ridge and viewed from afar the peaceful scene at the Ranch of the Pear. It was farther north than El Morro raided usually, but the Señor Upson had told him that it would be safe, as he, Upson, would create a diversion that would take all the ranch's defenders away on another quest.

Twirling up the waxed tips of his little dandy mustache and shaking his head till the bells on the rim of his high-crowned hat jingled again, the border chieftain laughed and then pointed out to his lieutenants, what should be done.

"Throw down the fences," he spoke to them in Spanish. "Start the *manada* quietly and keep them together. There is no one at home, since we knew Señor Keever is gone and his vaqueros also."

They rode down into the vale confidently and began work. They had done but a little when the flat, snappy report of a rifle came to their ears and one of the lieutenants of El Morro leaped from his saddle clutching his trouser seat and yelling. The wounded man's horse next fell, all in a heap!

"*Sangre de Diablo!*" El Morro shouted. "Some hombre, then remains. Work, then, the more quickly."

He began to throw lead at the house, from which the rifle continued to talk. Perhaps that first brace of shots was an accident, but at least Ma Potter hit no more of the crew, although she made sharp practice of it. They got the fence cut and rounded up the horses, all inside the fence as they had been left the night before. Lyle and Dunn had not

turned them loose that morning in their excitement. The wounded man mounted behind a friend at first; later he would ride a Pear mare. The stricken horse was left, inert. It only took a few moments for that group of skilled raiders to do the trick. Ma Potter, on the doorstep, brandished the rifle and called for them to "come back and fight like men." She saw them go over the farther ridge, yelling like Indians as they hazed the mares onward. The colts they left, as too weak to stand the hurried trip. El Morro, urging them on, turned for a shot at the plucky woman, but she replied by a bullet that cut a bell from his hat's rim. Then he was gone.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEELOCK DENIES.

SWEEPING south at a goodly lope, Billy Kever covered the ground toward the Wheelock ranch without delay. He was rather impatient because he had been called away from home, but the chance to get the Wheelock bunch of mares was too good to miss. Wheelock's was about forty miles from Encinal, and Kever had picked out his best trail horse for the trip. At sunset he was swinging down before the Wheelock *casa blanca*, where Frank Wheelock and his home-base hands were swapping lies as they rested up from the labors of the day.

"Why, I ain't sent you no note," Wheelock told him, puzzled.

"Is this a new kind of a joke, gettin' a man t' ride fifty miles for nothing?" Kever demanded, a bit on the prod.

"I'm tellin' you I ain't sent you no note. I ain't got a mare t' sell," he added a bit truculently.

"Is this your hand of write?" inquired Kever, extending to him the note.

"Not by a jugful! All I c'n write is my name," he informed, rather shame-faced over confessing to this lack, not

unusual with the old-timers. "I get my girl, Mandy, t' write all my billies-doo, and they're few and seldom."

Kever studied the note and began to think. "It may be just a joke and then—but say, Wheelock, take this horse of mine and give me something to slam between my laigs, will you?"

"You're goin' t' light down an' eat a snack."

"I'll eat in the saddle. Give me a hoss that can go, an' grub—I begin t' think that some one wanted me away from home so he c'd start something dirty with my back turned."

"All right, son. Hi, Manuel—Felicé—a hoss—and some of that fried side meat. Pronto!"

Ten minutes later Kever was hammering the trail toward Encinal with a game horse under him. He had shaken off, like magic, the fatigue of the long ride down. Man of iron that he was, he now called upon his horse for speed.

"We'll be in Encinal at midnight; home before the sun's up," he thought, as he was halfway to the town, but there his luck turned against him for the game Wheelock bay stepped into a hole and threw him and when Kever was again afoot, he caught the horse to find it lamed and limping badly.

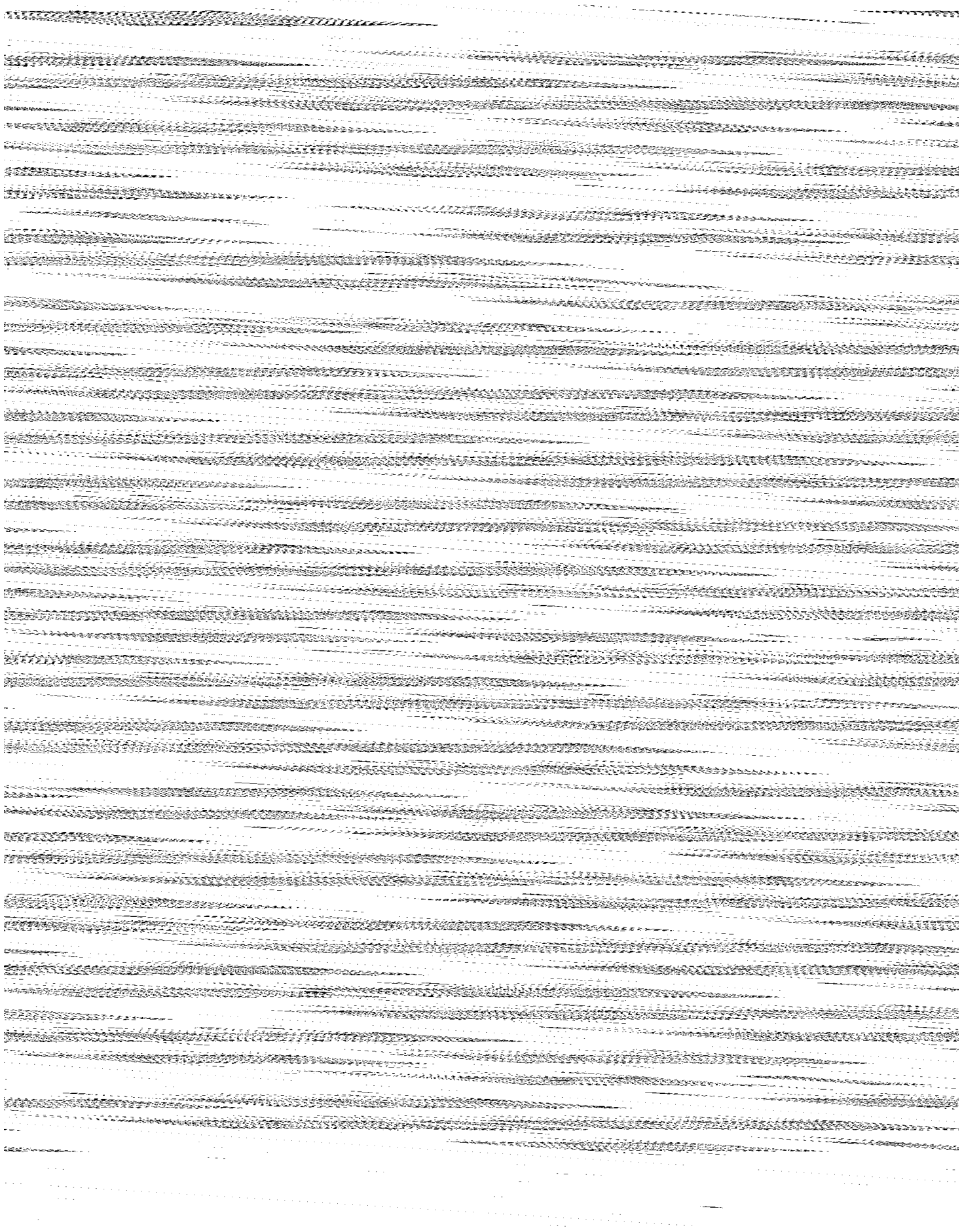
The night was dark; there were no places near at which he could get a remount. Much as he disliked forcing the lame horse onward, Kever made him hobble. Every mile seemed a year long, and as he rode, Kever felt a rising flood of doubt and dread beating up against his heart.

"What is it that worries me so?" he asked himself. Then he thought of Helen and her merry ways and of the sturdy boy she had found for a companion.

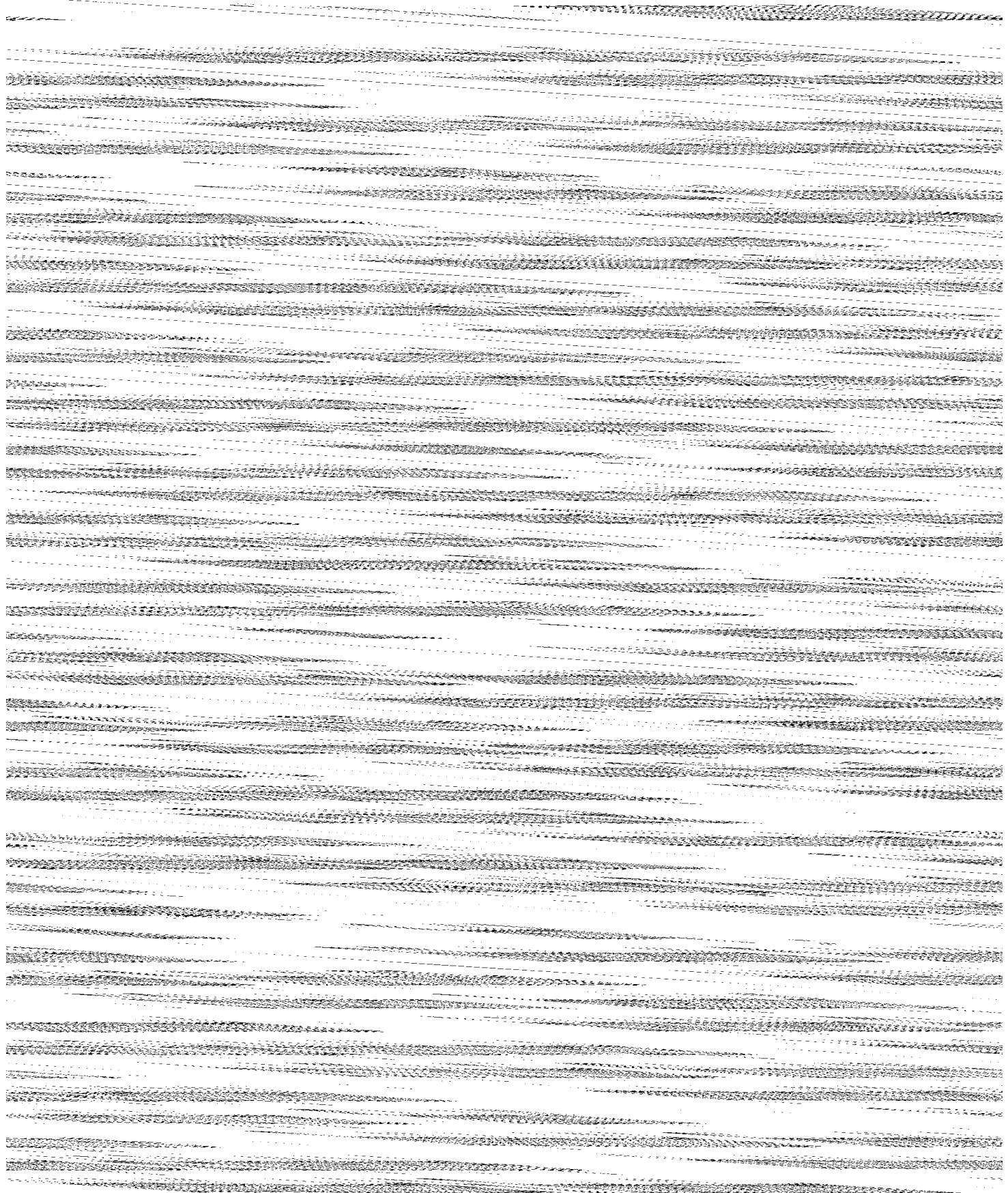
"I wonder if anything's wrong with her," he thought to himself.

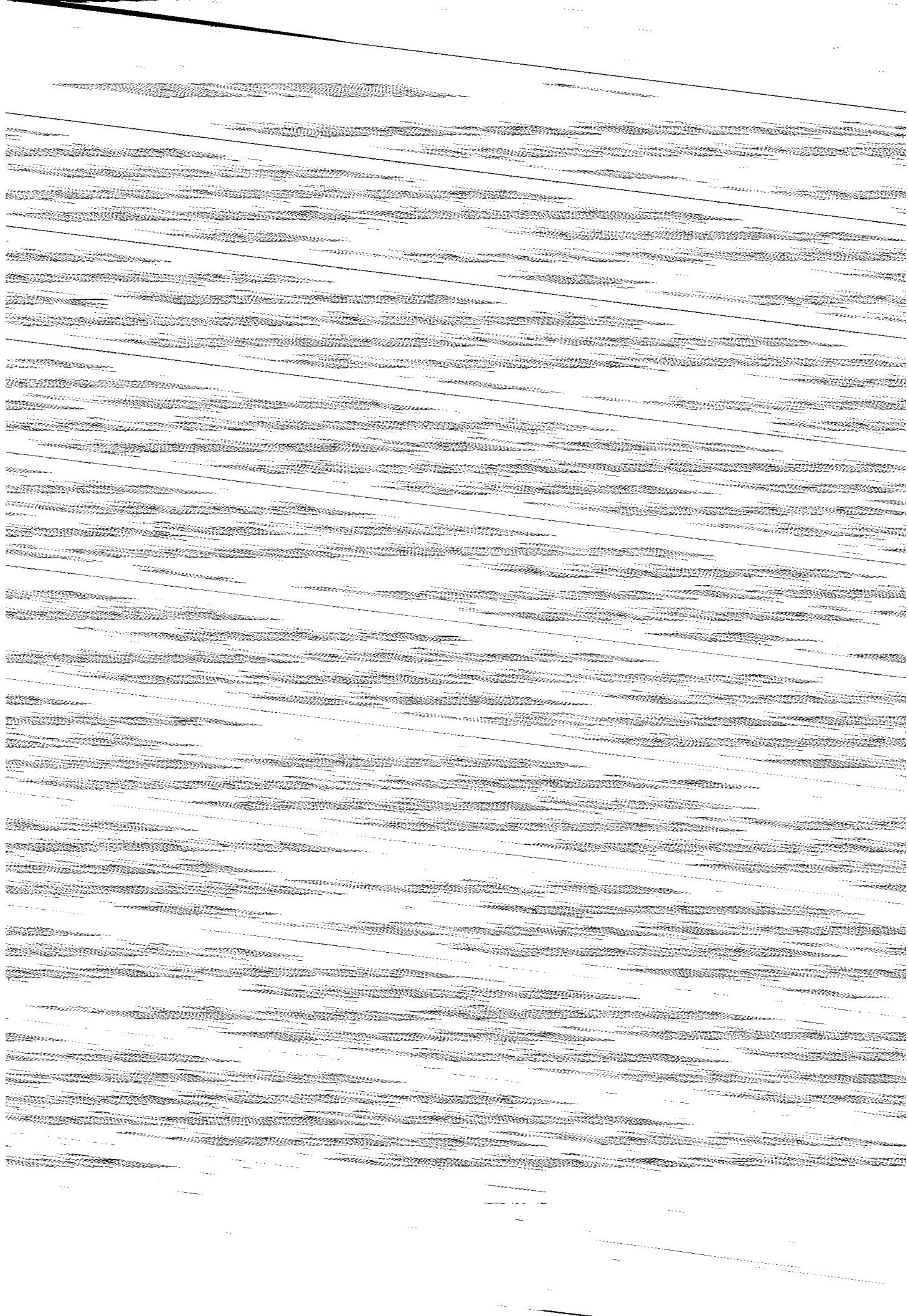
It was well after sunup that he came to Encinal. He wanted food and a horse.

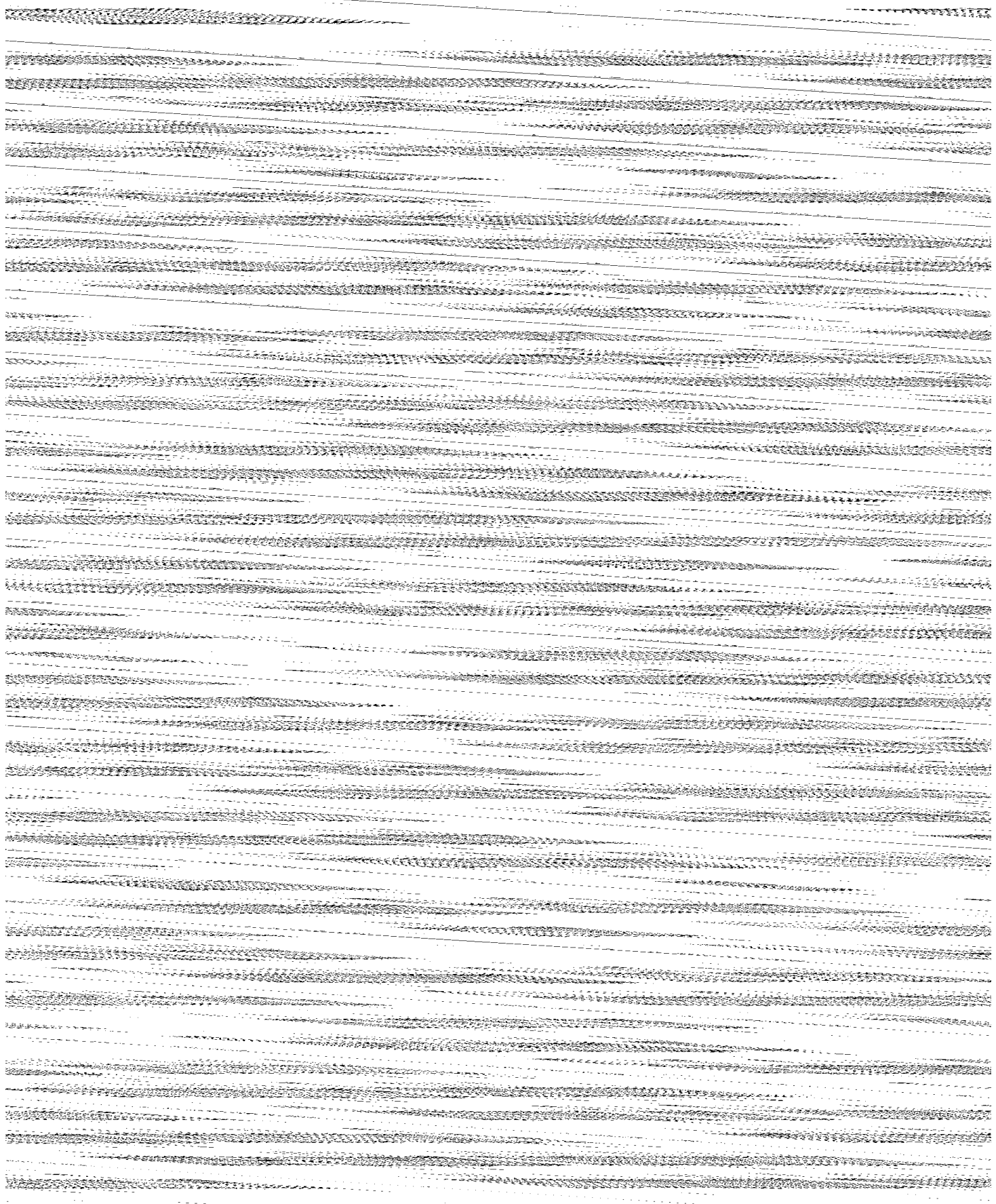
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taken somewhat aback, ordered him to drop the reins. Vrain and Seltzer, tensed, nudged Upson, who growled something to them.

"Here, Sunshine," Keever commanded.

The colt, instead, nickered and plunged forward, neck outstretched into the interior of the wagon.

Upson's whip descended, the wagon started!

Sunshine backed off, a bunch of cloth in his mouth—the gag of Helen, that he had been nuzzling, in the effort to find her cheek. He had, in fact, heard her choked whispers behind the gag as she had lain under the heavy blankets, hearing the words that told her that she was on the verge of being driven off and taken from Billy, just as he had appeared, almost, it seemed, by a miracle.

As the good colt backed away, kicking up his small heels and nickering his love note, Helen screamed. Keever leaped before the moving team and then the three on the seat were erect, their guns streaming lead and Keever, erect, fanned death into their faces!

Three forms pitched out of the wagon, and remained down. Keever, as the horses plunged over him, collapsed.

The dull-witted marshal, running around and around, called for help.

Gillian, Jackson, and Yates Gregory remembered at last to take their hands down.

People came swarming up, surrounding the tragic group.

Helen, her hair streaming over her shoulders, came over the tail board of the wagon as some one caught the horses' bridle-reins and checked them. Sam Jackson, coming alive tardily, caught Sunshine's lead strap.

The girl had no eyes for any one but Keever. She raced to him, and took his head into her lap as she sat on the ground. She rocked back and forth, holding his head close against her,

moaning: "Billy; oh, poor Billy Keever!"

He opened one blue-gray eye and sighed. "Is it you, Helen? Then I've saved you for Ols Brownlew; he's a good kid, all right, Helen, h'le gal. Good-by; it's gettin' dark——"

The dull-witted marshal seemed to realize something, for he ceased to gyrate and shouted: "If they had a girl kidnaped that a way they might've stole a colt; who knows."

"Give you time and you'll generate an idea," Gillian remarked dryly, reaching down to pick up the check he had made out in favor of Upson. He began to shred it to bits.

"Oh, Billy, poor Billy Keever," Helen moaned, patting the head in her lap.

Keever sighed, and his form seemed to stiffen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

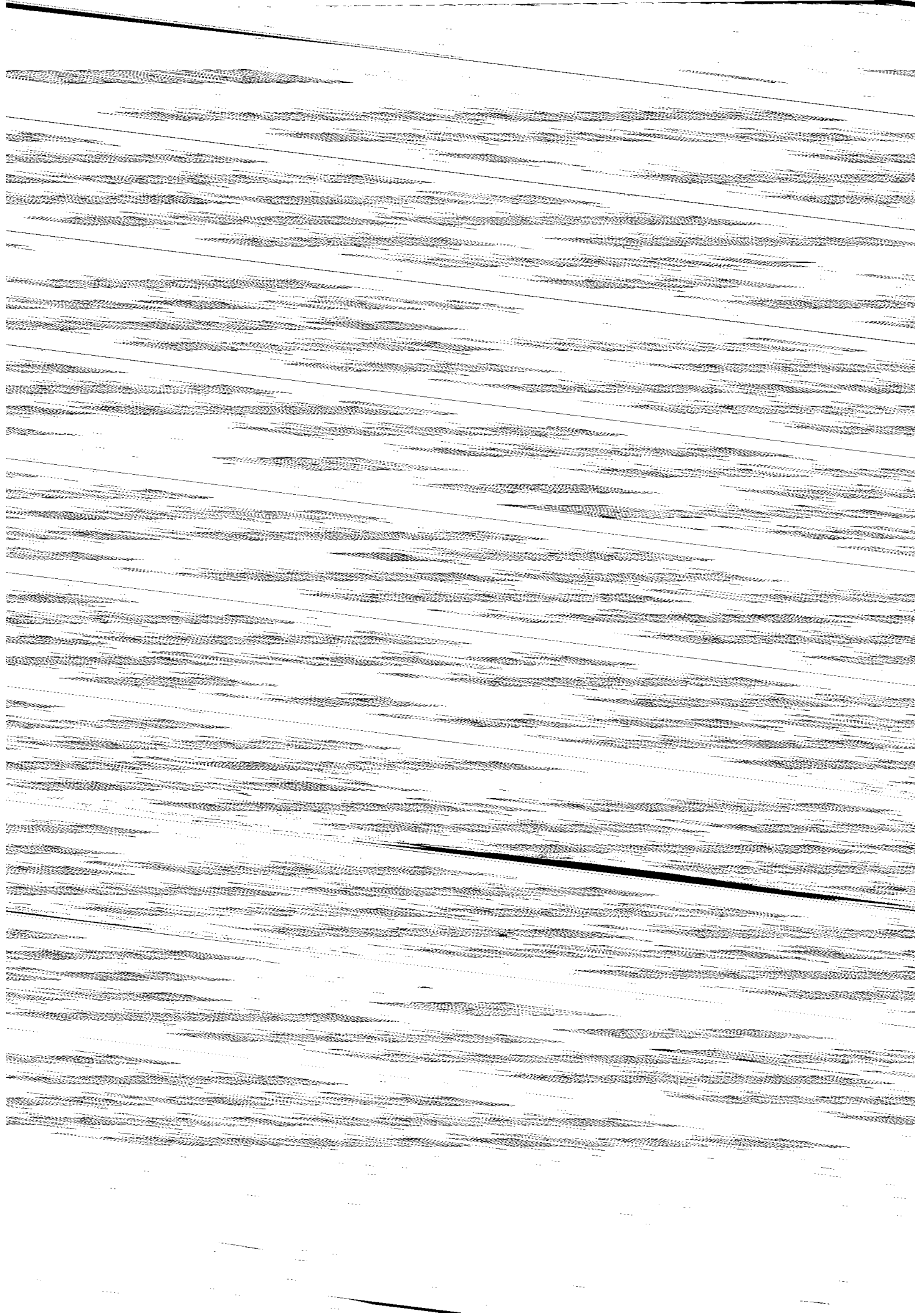
CAUGHT IN THE PASS.

SWEEPING down-country, gathering recruits as they rode, Bert Lyle, Herm Dunn, and Whalen, heading the pursuers, kept to the trail of El Morro. The Wheelock outfit joined in the hunt, and the united bands raced for the Big Thicket, toward which it was evident the border outlaw was heading. The pursuers rejoiced the third day, for they found three mares abandoned, and they took this as a sign that they were gaining.

Secure in the knowledge that they had made splendid time, and feeling that the Big Thicket, with its secure retreats was not far away, El Morro squared away to make the entrance to Southern Pass, a long, easy-rolling grade between hills. Once through there, he would be safe.

The bandits reached this pass just before dusk. As they topped the last rise, with the driven mares bunched ahead, the *manada* was seen suddenly to split, half going to each side.

Through the cleft in the horse herd



good colt's antics as he trotted or loped about. A puncher that Billy had hired, kept day and night watch over the colt now, until such time as Billy was able to ride.

"I'd feel better if I'd heard from Bert Lyle and Herm Dunn," Keever was saying.

"Well, there comes Ols Brownlew, now," she told him, pointing up the trail along the railroad tracks, where the grinning lad was riding toward them at a harum-scarum pace, slatting his pony along delightedly.

"I'll bet you're glad to see Ols," Billy said, as Ols swung down and went to the girl and kissed her, shouting: "Gee, Helen, I've got news. We smashed El Morro at the aidge of the Big Thicket, got all the mares, but a few back, got home and——"

"Any of our men hurt?" Billy asked anxiously.

"Not much; a few scratches. Mostly on Herm Dunn. Ma Potter'n he are engaged! And on my way back, Helen, I stopped off at our ranch and dad, he agreed to what we've been asking. He says I'm pretty young yet, but as long as you want it and are willing—to help me study so I'll get through school quick, he'll agree, so it's all——"

Billy started to stroll off. He did not want to hear that, somehow. He watched the colt frisking about in the pasture lot. Somehow the world did not seem so bright. Of course Ols was a good boy and Helen might prefer a young fellow, and all that, but she had been nursing him now for several days, and he had grown accustomed to the touch of her cool, soft hands and to the sound of her low, sweet voice and—of course——

"Billy," she called. "Ols is going to put his horse out."

Ols was riding away, whooping, slatting his horse along. He was headed for the hotel barns.

"Let him go; that's all right," Billy

said, vaguely unhappy. "Me, I'll visit Sunshine; you go an' make Ols happy; he's probably lonesome for you."

He got to the pasture fence and hung over it, suddenly weak and tired. He had been afoot too much, perhaps that day. It had seemed nice to be about in the sunshine of outdoors with the girl talking and laughing beside him. Now Ols had come back, bubbling with youth and happiness.

Keever felt two arms about his waist; heard a soft, low voice.

"Billy! Ols has told me his dad had agreed to something that makes us happy. He's been wanting to have his cousin Lena, that lives with them, go to the mission school, when he and I go. Lena's a nice girl and Ols is sweet on her. They're goin' to be married when they're old enough."

"They're goin' to be married!" Keever exclaimed rather thick voiced.

"Yes; I've been in his secret ever since he came to Ma Potter's t' visit first, an' he and Lena are sweethearts."

"They are!"

"Yes, ain't it nice t' be sweethearts, Billy?" she asked, snuggling up to him as Sunshine came over to see them.

"I think it is," he agreed, finding his arm stealing around her slim waist. "Yes, it is—and if you were older, I'd—I'd——" he stopped, hardly daring to complete it.

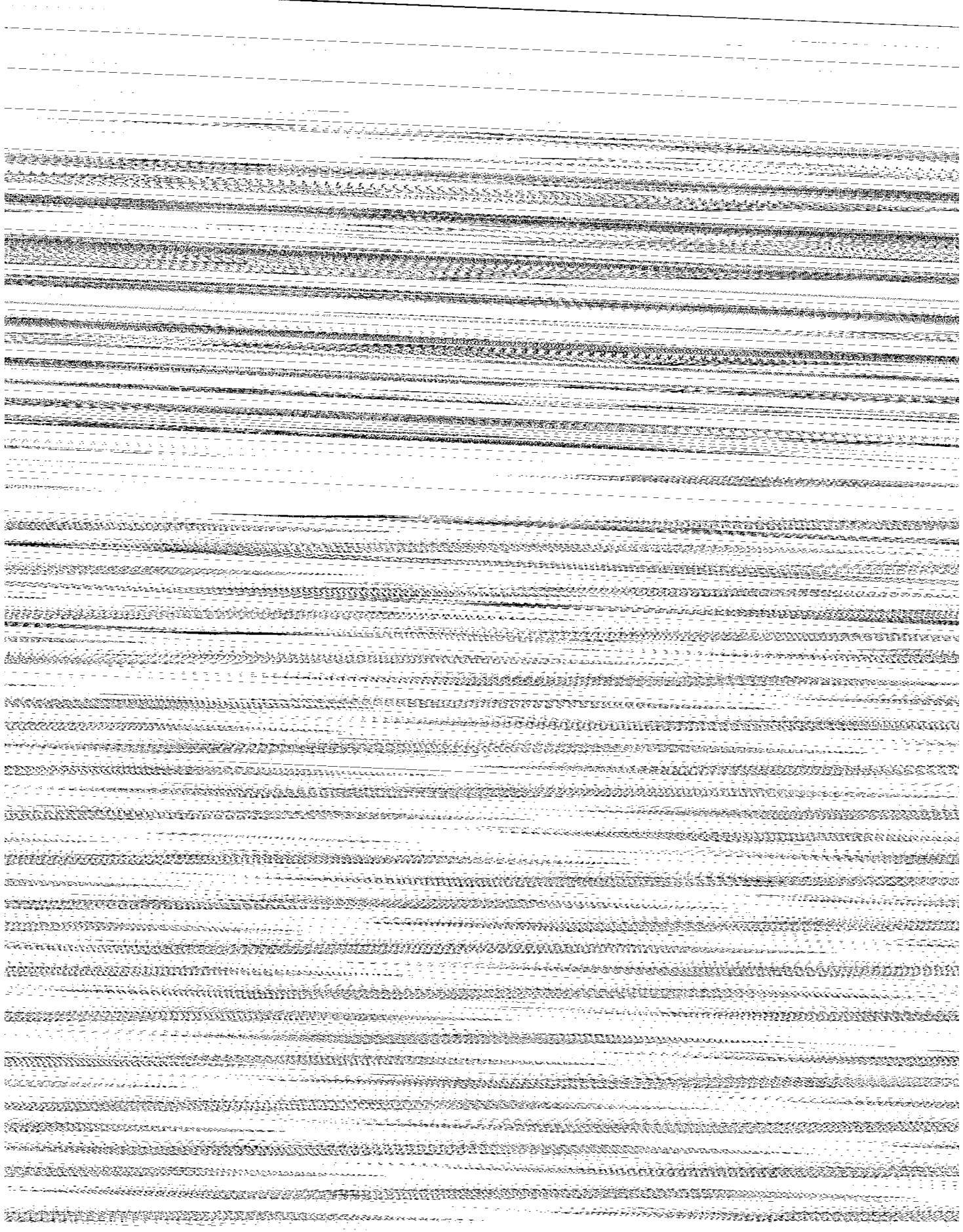
"Oh, yes, would you, Billy?" she asked, as Sunshine nosed in between their faces.

"Sure would," he answered almost breathlessly.

"It'll only take me two years to finish school, and then I'll be almost seventeen——"

"And an engagement of say a year would make you almost eighteen?" he suggested, lifting her face for a kiss.

"Yes, Billy, I love you, Billy Keever!" Sunshine? The rascal was begging for a share of their kiss of betrothal—and somehow he got it.



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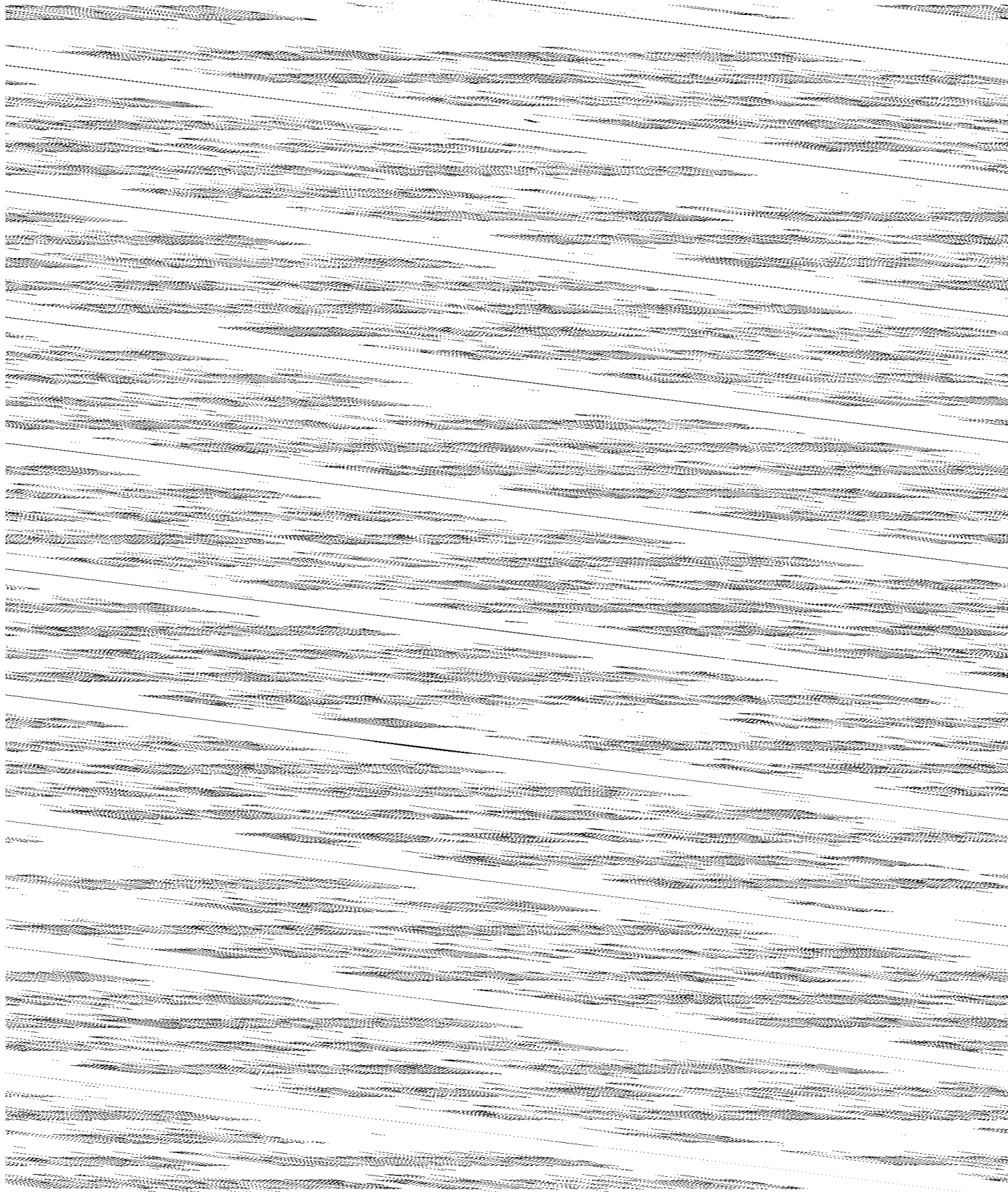


figure of his daughter, vanished, and they hardened. He opened his mouth, but closed it again with a snap. Whatever was on his tongue he had decided not to say it in the presence of his neighbors.

It was nearing sundown, and the different ranchers having received their checks, had long since departed, when Cleve Owens and Bess drew up at the gate of the T Y T barn corral. Bending from his saddle, the man drew back the latch bar and, urging his horse against the heavy gate, forced it open. With a murmured word of thanks the girl rode through, dismounting by a watering trough which flanked one corner of the barn. Presently, after latching the gate, the man followed and swung to the ground beside her. He reached for the off strap at which she was tugging.

"Never mind unsaddling, Bess. I'll attend to it. We're late enough as it is."

She thanked him with a look from a pair of deep blue eyes and crinkled up her face prettily in a sort of a don't-care look. Bess Aubrey was a mighty attractive girl—resembled her mother, old-timers who knew, averred. And she was competent as well. Since her mother's death some years before, she had assumed full charge of the T Y T household.

"Much obliged, Cleve," she said and, letting herself through another gate, hurried up the path that led to the ranch house.

Leisurely and with a grace and ease that bespoke long practice, Cleve, after loosing the girth, swung the heavy stock saddles to the topmost bar of the corral. Then, with meticulous care, he washed and rubbed dry the sweated backs of both horses and turned them loose in a small pasture behind the barn. While he was engaged in spreading the wet blankets across a rude drying rack, Flint Aubrey appeared coming down the path from the direction of the ranch house.

Flint was a stocky, gray-eyed man, forceful of manner, abrupt of speech, and with a dominant personality. He was reputed to be as hard as his name would imply, but a fair man withal. And like most men of such character, he never minced words, but invariably drove straight at the heart of the matter.

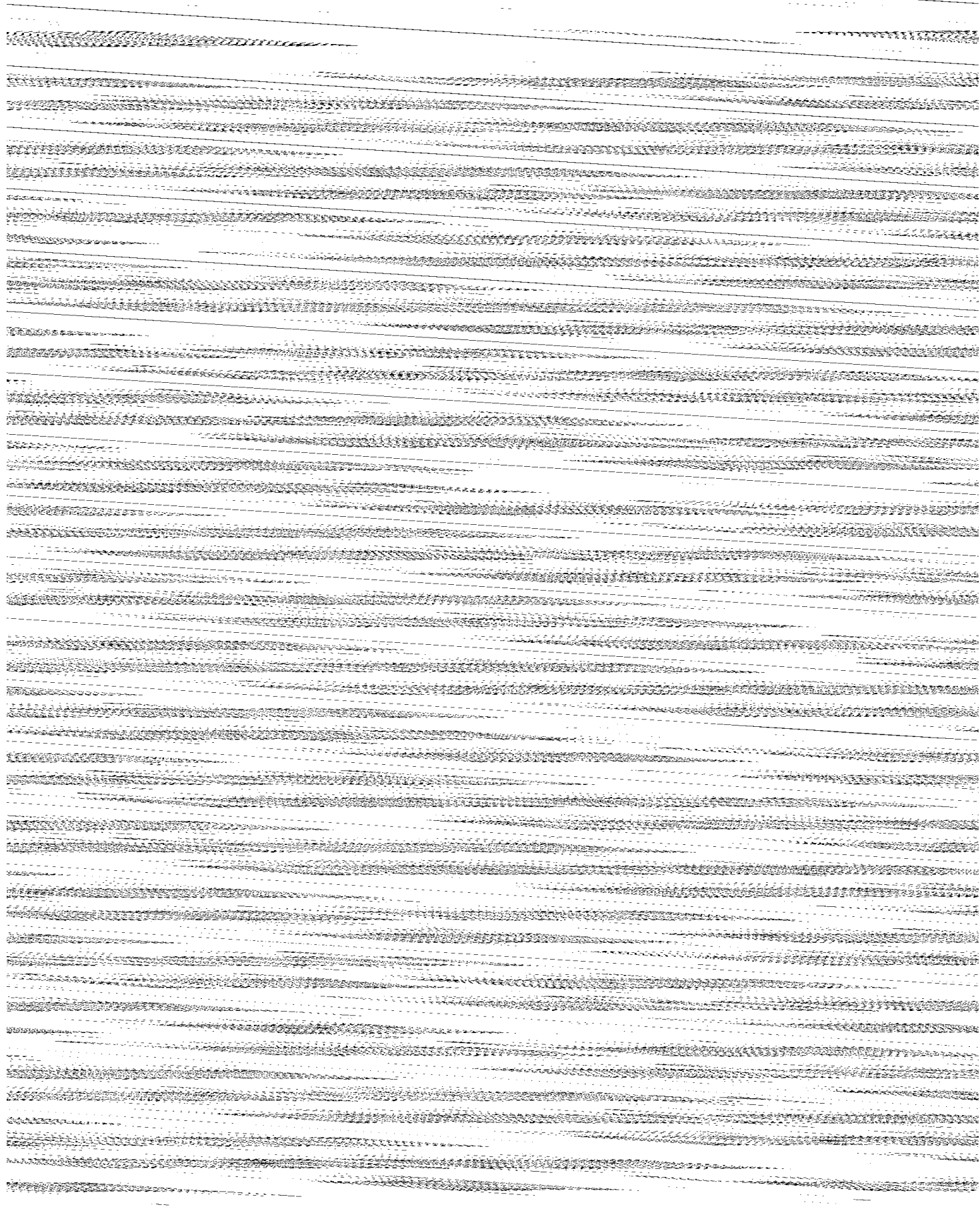
After entering the corral, he waited until Cleve had arranged the blankets on the rack to his entire satisfaction, then beckoned the cowboy to him. Cleve walked across to where the older man stood, silent and uncompromising.

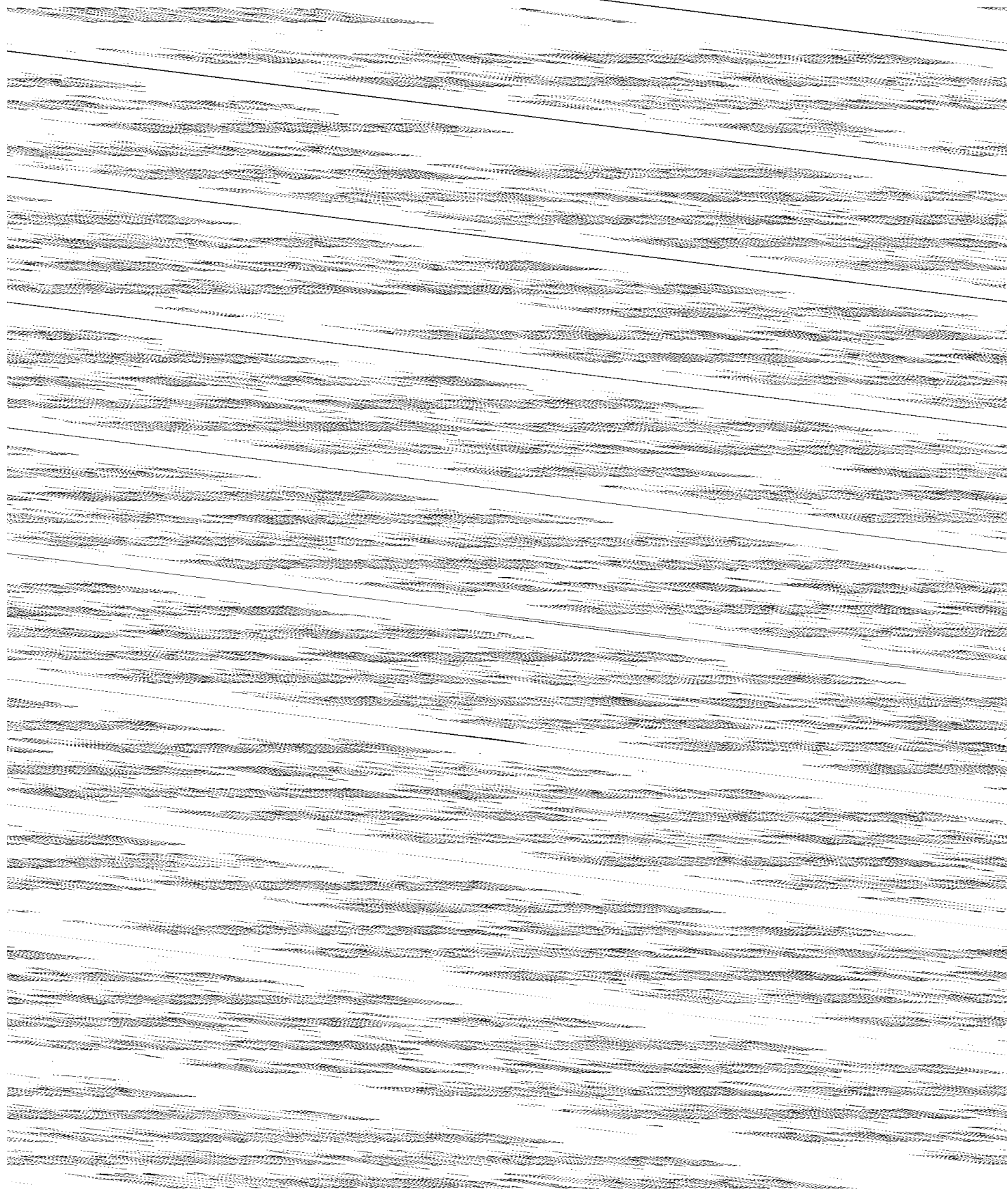
"I have decided," Flint began with his usual curt incisiveness as Cleve stopped, "that your period of usefulness at the T Y T has ended. Your time is up day after to-morrow, and if you will come to the house after supper, I will have your check ready. In the morning you can start for the cañon pasture and fix a few gaps in the fence there. In that way you can put in the balance of your time, and it won't be necessary for you to come back to the ranch. You can ride one of our horses and turn it loose in Valdez or wherever you stop. It'll come back home."

A flush showing dully under his sun-tanned skin was the only evidence that this summary dismissal came as an unlooked-for and unwelcome surprise to the cowboy.

Cleve was a tall, dark-eyed young fellow with a likable face that was fashioned in strong lines. A close student of character would readily have deduced that it needed only a touch here and there from the scalpel of that master molder, Adversity, to fashion it into a countenance as ruggedly determined as that of the man facing him. You could see that a stubborn, unyielding determination was characteristic from the grim manner in which his mouth line tightened at Flint's words.

"Understand this," Flint continued, before Cleve had a chance to reply—"it is not because your work is unsatisfac-





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was of his own. Justice would be rendered impartially all felt sure.

At eleven the posse started, a dozen somber, determined men bent on bringing the culprit to justice. Big Ike and the vaqueros accompanied them. It was just breaking day when they gained the neighborhood of the shack. A whinny from the lean-to stable warned them that a horse was stabled there. Dismounting, they stole quietly toward the door of the shack. Alf Commons, the leader, knocked, and when Cleve in a sleepy voice replied, he demanded admittance.

They heard Cleve's feet hit the floor and patter across the room. When he flung the door open a dozen guns covered him.

"What the devil——" he began, his voice perplexed, but Flint motioned him to silence with his six-shooter.

"Get inside and no funny moves," he commanded harshly.

Unarmed and utterly powerless, Cleve stepped back in the shack. The cold, snappy tang of a fall morning made it as chilly inside the cabin as it was without, and the scantily dressed prisoner shivered involuntarily.

Old man Alf Commons noticed Cleve shake. "Slip on the rest of your clothes, son," he said not unkindly, and, turning to one of Big Ike's vaqueros directed him to straighten up the leaning chimney and start a fire in the stove.

While these instructions were being carried out the posse draped themselves on the various chairs and boxes, two of them, guns in hand, taking a position at the door. When the fire was well alight, and Cleve had finished dressing, the gray-bearded leader drew up to the small table and motioned Cleve to take the chair opposite him.

"Young man," he said in a stern manner, "it looks very much as if you were the one who robbed the stage of twenty-three thousand dollars yesterday morning. Now in order to give you a fair

chance to clear yourself, providing you are not guilty, I will state the evidence we have against you."

Then, slowly, but with great emphasis, he narrated the circumstances beginning with Cleve's incautious remark to his bunk-house companion and ending by producing the burlap sack with the holes in it.

"Now if you can explain any of this away or prove that you did not come from the direction of the holdup carrying a suit case shortly after the robbery occurred, you are at liberty to do so."

Cleve deliberated for a space, his mouth tightened, and he shrugged. "Saterlee's correct. I brought a suit case up here with me all right," he said, "but I didn't rob any stage."

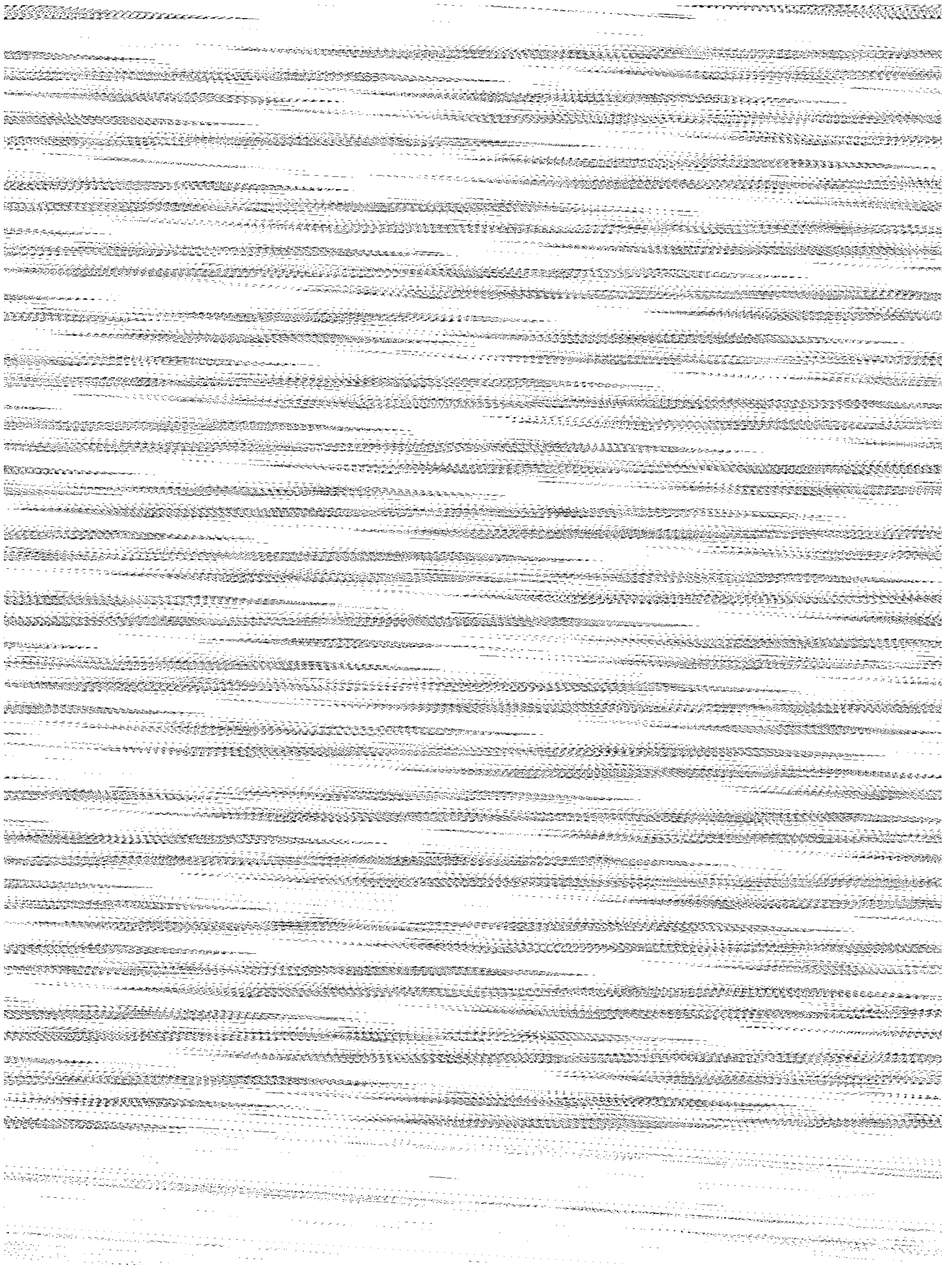
Old Alf nodded. "So far so good," he said. "Now I propose that you tell us where the suit case is, and if it is not the one we are searching for, that will be a point in your favor."

But at this suggestion Cleve rebelled. His jaw hardened with grim determination, and his mouth set stubbornly. "I don't reckon it's any of you men's business about that suit case," he said shortly.

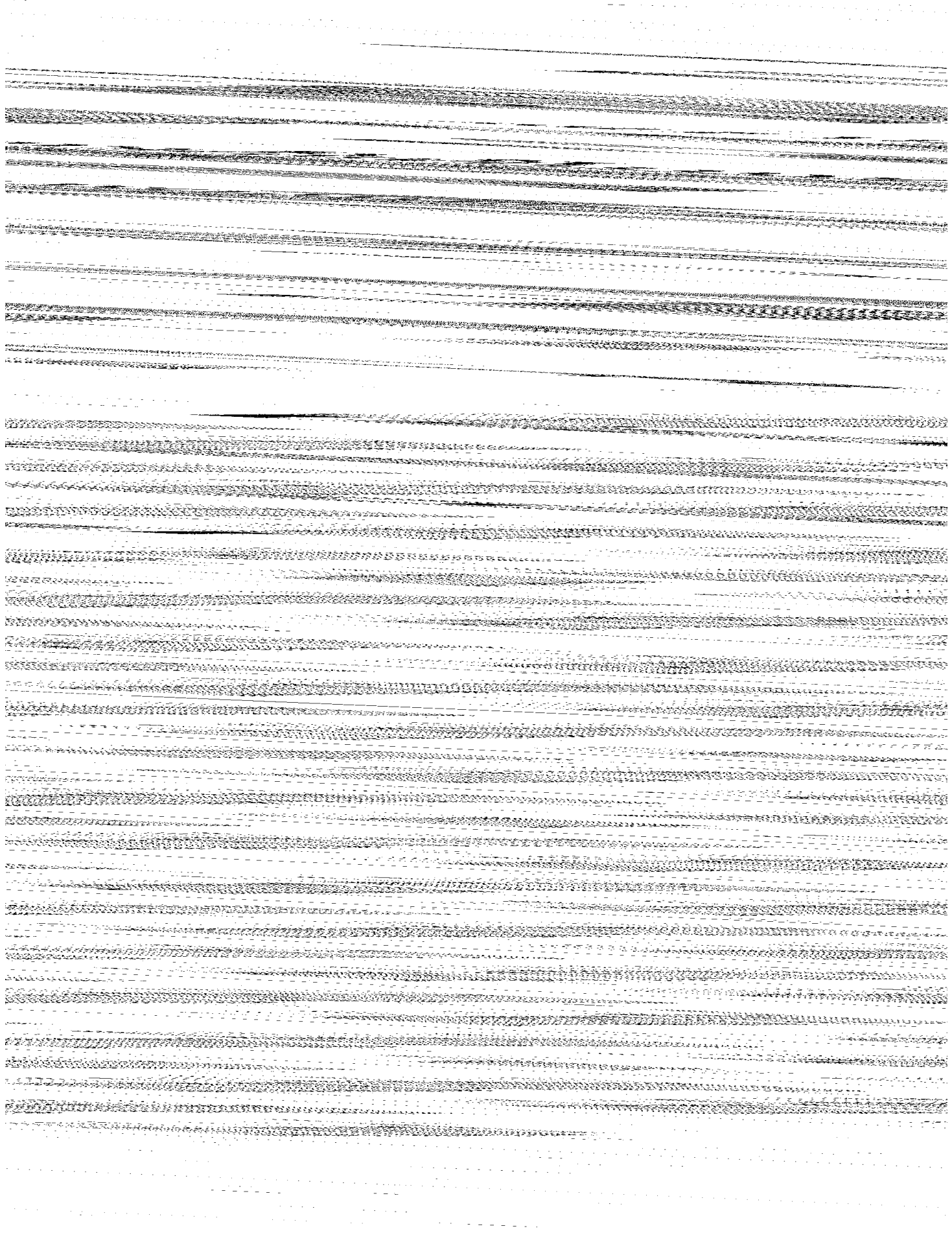
A threatening murmur arose from the posse at this. Several of them were outspoken in their declaration that he would have to produce the suit case, and one young and impetuous rancher nodded to the hot stove suggestively, declaring that he knew a way of making Cleve come through.

Alf Commons, however, paid no heed to the talk but sat silent, as if deliberating, seeking for some line of argument that would make Cleve realize the futility of his position.

It was just at this juncture that there came a rapid tattoo of hoofs into the clearing. Almost immediately there was an eager knock at the door. It was opened by one of the guards at a nod from Alf, and Bess Aubrey stood framed in the doorway. His body bar-



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At the end of the hour, as Hunter looked up toward the crest of the hill, Yuma Tom walked into sight. "Bring horses and come 'long up here, Mista Bob," he shouted.

Hunter swung into the saddle on his well-built buckskin and with Yuma Tom's own mount—the great-chested, white-coated stallion, Smoky Cloud—on a leading rope, started up the hillside, dotted here and there with scraggly brush.

"Well, Tom," Hunter inquired, as he reached the hill's rocky top, "what've you found out?"

"Quite a bit, maybe, Mista Bob. But come 'long with me."

With the ease of a young man, Yuma Tom mounted Smoky Cloud and started across the low, gray hills. A quarter of an hour later on he stopped at the edge of a clump of scrub oaks, the tallest of which was about ten feet high, and remarked: "Get down now, Mista Bob."

Hunter dismounted, his eyes at once turning toward the ground, as he followed the little tracker into the scrubby oaks. Here, beside the footprints of moccasined feet, were also hoof tracks of horses. And what was more, the imprints of men's boots and shoes.

These Hunter saw for himself. But it was Yuma Tom who explained how the moccasins had been changed for stout leather shoes or boots with heavy soles.

"Two men hold up stage, steal mail, and come here," he said. "Tracks tell me that. They think because they walk on rocks part of time that nobody can followum. Then here—where they have cayuses tied—they changum moccasins for boots and shoes. Then ride away. This plain to you?"

"Yeah, Tom—sort of. And I b'lieve that you're right in your deductions. Still, where does that lead us? This is a big stretch of country. There are lots of folks hereabouts. Is what we've

found out going to help us any more than just makin' sure that the men who did the job wasn't Indians?"

"Um, yes. I read things in tracks of shoes that you no seeum at all. Heels on boots of man with big feet have piece of iron on outside, to keep heels from runnin' over. I see that when his heel sink extra deep in soft dirt. The other man gotum shoes with heap pointed toes. Who 'round Calito wear shoes like that?"

"Almost any Mexican dandy, Tom. Pointed-toed shoes and Mexicans sort of run together—when they wear shoes at all. Seem to take to 'em 'bout the same as they do to the high crown, decorated sombreros. That there don't help us a whole lot—unless you can trail these hombres right to where we can lay our hands on 'em. And as they've had nigh onto eight hours' start, it looks as if the chance of overtakin' them by trackin', is slim. You'll have to go slow. They are hittin' it up."

"Um." Yuma Tom looked at the horses' tracks, leading toward the edge of the clump of oaks. "That most likely so. They ride heap fast. So what you want me to do? Follow trail?"

"Yeah, Tom. That's it. Track 'em down! And if there's anybody who can keep after 'em till they're cornered—you're that one."

"Um, yes," Yuma Tom nodded. "All right, then. Come 'long."

Afoot for a mile over the low, hilly country, he followed the horses' tracks with little difficulty. Then he swung into the saddle on the dull white stallion's back and headed south toward the United States-Mexico boundary line—the grizzled sheriff, astride his buckskin, following close to the rear.

About half-past five, after crossing a two-mile, dusty, alkali flat, they rode into some other hills, finding them badly cut up with small rocky cañons, gullies, ravines, and somber gray fractures.

"Bad place for trackum," the wrinkled, sharp-eyed old redskin remarked, in half grunts that were almost unintelligible. "They come here on purpose—maybe—just to hide trail. Um. Guhh!

"Still, I no licked. It heap better for us, though, if it morning—instead of so close to dark. Little daylight time left. But perhaps—"

He said no more, but swung to the ground and at once began looking for signs of his quarry. Back and forth he walked, his nearly naked body bent far over, his rifle in his right hand, and his coal-black eyes fixed on the ground.

Time passed rapidly. The sun dipped behind the hills. The trail was very confusing.

The dull shadows of evening made the light poor before the trail straightened itself out so that Yuma Tom could say definitely which way the fugitives had finally taken. And then, sheriff and tracker stood on the ground within a short distance of the boundary line.

"Gone to Mexico," said Yuma Tom laconically. "Now what?"

"Nothing—for me, Tom. I can't go into Mexico after my man.

"Still, there's one thing more you can do for me. And that is, trail 'em till you find out who they are. Meanwhile, I'll nose around on the United States side of the line to see who's missin'. Get what I mean?"

"Um-m—yes, Mista Bob. I sabe. I do that easy nuff, 'cause I know north part of Mexico good as Arizona. Yaqui Injuns down that way. And Apache and Yaquis 'most same tribe.

"But when I find this pair, what I do withum? Bring 'em to you?"

Hunter thumbed his chin. "That's what I'd like you to do, Tom. But it can't be that a way.

"You see, those coyotes are in another country. And an officer in the United States ain't got the lawful right

to go tearin' into other lands after prisoners. If they should be nabbed this side of the line, though—well, that's altogether different.

"Most likely those hombres are headin' for Santa Cruz. That's a great hangout for border tough cases.

"You've got a friend there, too—come to think of it. John Green—the United States secret service man—doing postal work a good deal of his time. You remember him? The tall, fine-looking hombre around forty, with black hair and eyes. The man you trailed Pedro Guzman and his gang for, after they broke into the post office up Crayton way. If you see him, tip him off to what has happened.

"You remember how to make yourself known to him or any other man in the service, in that secret way of theirs. Green told me that he put you on to some of the signs and words.

"When you've got your men located, get word to me. Then I'll go at bringin' 'em back in the regular way—if it can be done. Hard, though, to get anybody out of Mexico.

"Your pay will be the same on this job as on the others you've done for the country. Like the idea of it?"

"Um; sure, Mista Bob. I like it fine. So when light come again, I go south on trail. To-night, Smoky Cloud and me stay here. Feed for horse fair, and I gotum some grub in saddle-bag."

The stars were out when Sheriff Hunter, after shaking hands with his little old Indian friend, headed north for his office in Calito, while Yuma Tom made ready to spend the night where he was.

When the sky in the east began to lighten with the approach of day, he rose from the ground, and after draping over his shoulders the blanket in which he had slept, he saddled the smoky white stallion, preparatory to taking up the trail.

At first, on account of the light, he traveled afoot. But as it grew brighter, and he found himself in Mexico, with his quarry now riding boldly southward, apparently not at all trying to cover over their trail, he rode on after them at fairly good speed.

Shortly before noon he was in a Mexican store on the outskirts of Santa Cruz, buying a blue cotton shirt and a high-crowned sombrero. As Sheriff Hunter had prophesied, the trail led to the lively border town.

Now it was a question of locating a man with big feet, who had small strips of iron screwed to the outside heel of his boots, and a man with pointed, Mexican shoes. The high heels of stockmen's boots were quite likely to be stayed with a strip of malleable iron on the wearing side, to keep the heels from running over.

By midnight the little redskin—blanket thrown around his shoulders Mexican fashion, and his new sombrero on his head—was looking over the crowd in the Conejo Blanco combination saloon and gambling house—smoke-filled, brightly lighted, and noisy. He felt that he might have his men spotted. At any rate, sitting in front of a faro table was a big American, wearing boots with heel irons on them. The man sitting at his elbow was a Mexican who, as Yuma Tom knew, went by the name of "The Rabbit."

The big American, Jim Guthrie—mean of eye, hard of face, with a drooping, sandy mustache and wearing rough out-of-door garb and knee-length boots—was also known to Yuma Tom. Not alone through several meetings, but—like the swarthy-faced, beady-eyed Rabbit—by reputation, also.

Moving closer to the faro layout, Yuma Tom watched from under his wide-brimmed hat. Guthrie won a bet—while The Rabbit lost.

Suddenly Guthrie turned around. And as he looked into Yuma Tom's

wizened face, he gave a start. He had known the old Indian for a long time. He knew, too, of the intimacy between him and the grizzled sheriff. What the red man was doing in Santa Cruz, Guthrie might find out by asking. So he growled out: "What you doin' here, Injun?"

"Just come down this way to have pow-wow with my Yaqui brothers," Yuma Tom lied.

Guthrie grunted and resumed play, losing the next three bets. The Rabbit lost, also; and when each fished a large roll of bills from inside his shirt, to buy more chips, Yuma Tom eyed the money with keen interest. Where did they get so much cash?

Twice more Guthrie lost. Then he turned to Yuma Tom and snarled out: "Looka here, Injun; you're my Jonah! I'm goin' to throw you out."

Pushing his chair back, he arose and, unceremoniously hustling the little red man to the door, shoved him out into the night.

"Them red cattle never ought to be allowed indoors at all," said Guthrie shortly, as he took his chair in front of the layout again. "If I wuz runnin' a joint, they never would be allowed to cross the doorsill. Now you watch me bust the bank!"

From the way that Guthrie and The Rabbit won after that it really seemed that Yuma Tom's presence had had some influence on their luck. For, within an hour, the white-toothed Mexican faro dealer shrugged his shoulders, and, as he turned the box down, announced wryly: "The bank is broken. I congratulate you."

Very naturally, Guthrie and The Rabbit left the Conejo Blanco in high good humor, after treating the whole house. As they crossed the street, Yuma Tom stepped from an alley, with the apparent intention of following them. Yet in the middle of the dusty thoroughfare he stopped, and after lighting a match,

began examining their tracks in the dust.

A Yaqui Indian friend coming up, asked in the Apache tongue: "For what are you looking?"

"For a nice new American ten-cent piece," Yuma Tom returned, his gaze fixed on one of Guthrie's footprints. Then he turned his eyes to the tracks of The Rabbit.

The footprints that he had just studied were made by the same boots and shoes as those in the clump of scrubby oaks. There was no doubt of it. Yet what good would the footprints do toward proving that Guthrie and The Rabbit had held up the Calto stage, stole the registered mail, robbed the passengers, and killed the driver?

Yuma Tom was satisfied Sheriff Hunter would be, too. But for extradition purposes, footprints would not, in all probability, be sufficient evidence. Yuma Tom wished that he could have a talk with Green. That was it. The first thing in the morning, then, he would try to find his man.

He did try—only to learn that Green had left Santa Cruz two days before. At this piece of news, the little Indian thumbed his red chin thoughtfully. By nightfall, when the big oil lamps threw their light over the crowd already gathering in the Conejo Blanco for more hours of hilarity and gaming—with a new bank roll ready at the faro layout—he had nothing definite planned.

Yet when Guthrie and The Rabbit awoke the next forenoon, after a night of carousing, they were much surprised to find that their footwear had been stolen. Guthrie, on account of his large feet, would have a hard time replacing his high boots.

Possibly they suspected who the thief was. At any rate, when early in the afternoon they met Yuma Tom on the main street of Santa Cruz, they were very abusive to him—Guthrie, wearing the largest shoes that he could buy in

town, going so far as to knock the little Indian down.

Rising slowly, Yuma Tom picked up his sombrero, put it on his head, and then, with his blanket about his shoulders, walked away—a hundred pairs of eyes turned upon him.

Now, as when Guthrie had put him out of the Conejo Blanco, Yuma Tom could not give way to his natural impulse to fight back. He considered himself working under orders. His boss, Sheriff Bob Hunter, would not try to bring on a real fight with men he calculated on landing in jail. It would not, according to the ethics of a white-man officer, be at all the right thing to do.

More than ever, now, the old red-skin wished that Green was in Santa Cruz. But as he was not, there was nothing Yuma Tom could do, save try to find evidence enough to fasten the crime for a certainty on The Rabbit and Guthrie, and then report to Hunter.

For the next two days Guthrie and The Rabbit made it a point to look up Yuma Tom and to abuse him shamefully. They were drinking heavily, and as they had plenty of money to spend, had the run of Santa Cruz.

Then another American, calling himself Jed Higson, drifted into town and immediately allied himself with Guthrie and his dark-skinned partner.

Higson was of medium height, very broad of shoulder, roughly dressed, with several days' growth of bristly reddish beard on his face, and a jaw that was decidedly pugnacious. He looked like a bruiser and acted the same. And the holster in which he carried his ugly, blue-black revolver was scarred and worn.

Twice, when with The Rabbit and Guthrie, he laughed uproariously at the way in which they abused Yuma Tom. And then he asked to be permitted to spank the little man. Yuma Tom es-

aped this humiliation only by what seemed each time a piece of luck. First it was a pistol duel between a couple of Mexican cowboys. The other time, it was a runaway team, which for the moment attracted everybody's attention.

Thereafter, whenever he saw a chance of dodging Higson, he did so. He certainly intended, however, to settle with him at some later date.

"That white man with reddish whiskers, bad medicine," Yuma Tom confided to his Yaqui friend. "If it were not that I have something of much account on my mind, I would settle with him in the way of our fathers. Never before did I dodge any man. But with him, I must—until a little later on. Then, in my own way, I shall make him fight me as I say—or admit that he is a coward."

Another day passed. And when Green still did not return to Santa Cruz, the little redskin decided to take matters entirely into his own hands. He was not going to loaf around any longer.

Shortly before ten o'clock the next morning, Guthrie and The Rabbit—sleeping in the same room—awoke after a night of drinking and gambling, to get a shock that brought them out of bed in a hurry. Somebody had robbed them of not only the money they had stolen, but also of what was left of their winnings. And that somebody was, so they guessed—from the red flannel head band lying inside an open window—old Yuma Tom. When they found moccasined footprints in the dirt, just outside of the window, they were positive as to who had been the thief.

A half hour later, on the outskirts of Santa Cruz—Higson now with them—they saw Yuma Tom, astride Smoky Cloud, apparently heading for the United States. Although the trio were more than seventy-five yards away, they saw that the Indian had a pair of knee-length boots dangling behind the cantle of his saddle, and something that looked

like a pair of shoes tied with the boots.

"There's my boots!" Guthrie choked out, his hand flying down to the butt of his holstered revolver.

"And my shoes!" The Rabbit echoed huskily. "And he probably has the money in his saddlebags. What shall we do?"

"Git our horses and take after him!" This from Higson, quickly. "We dastn't risk shootin' at him. Distance too great fer side-arm stuff. He'd know right off we suspicioned him, and would ride like the devil straight to his own people. Then that would settle the whole business.

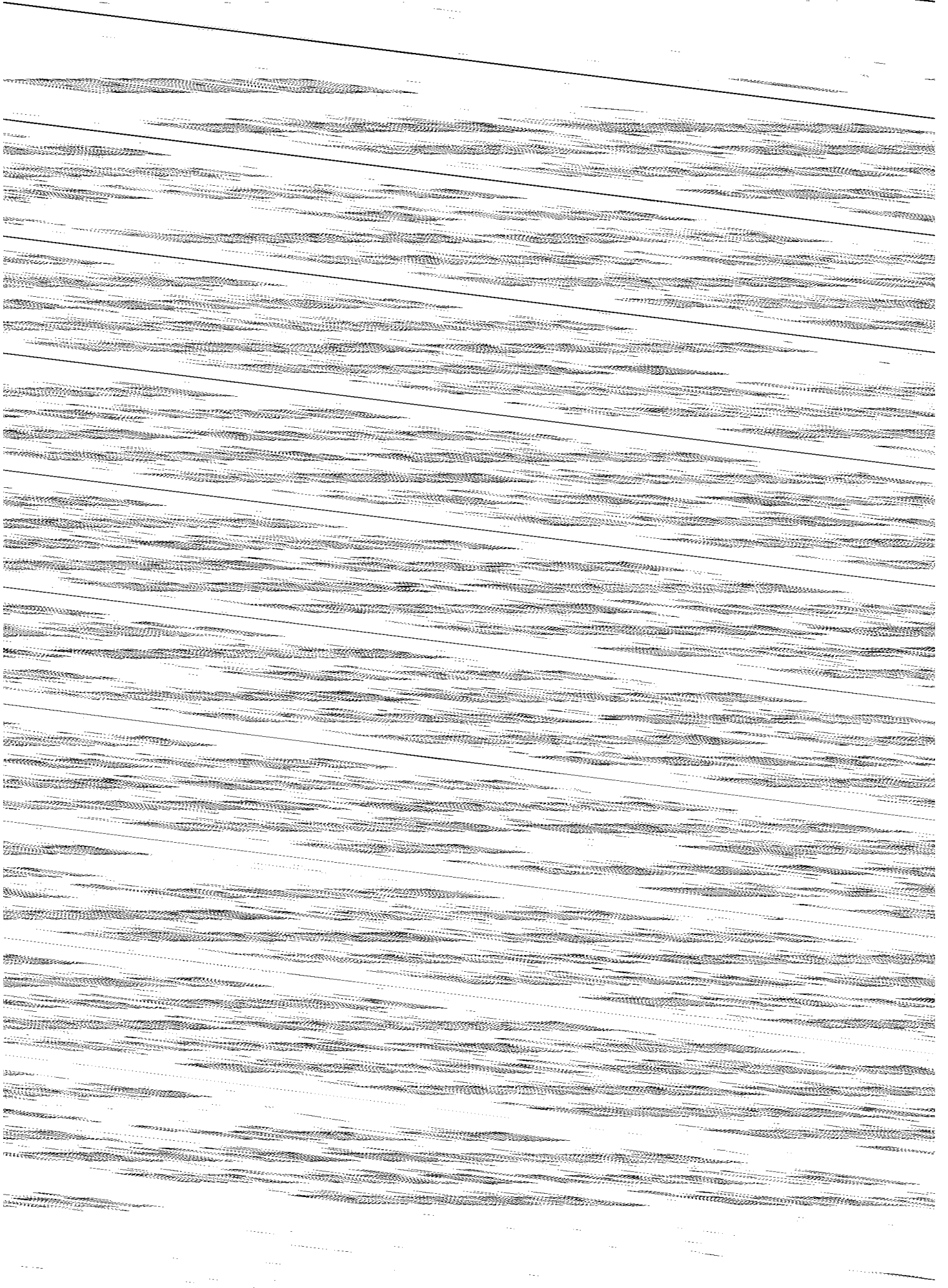
"Come, git our horses and try to cut him off this side of the line. He won't know we're followin' 'im, so he'll most likely ride slow. What you say?"

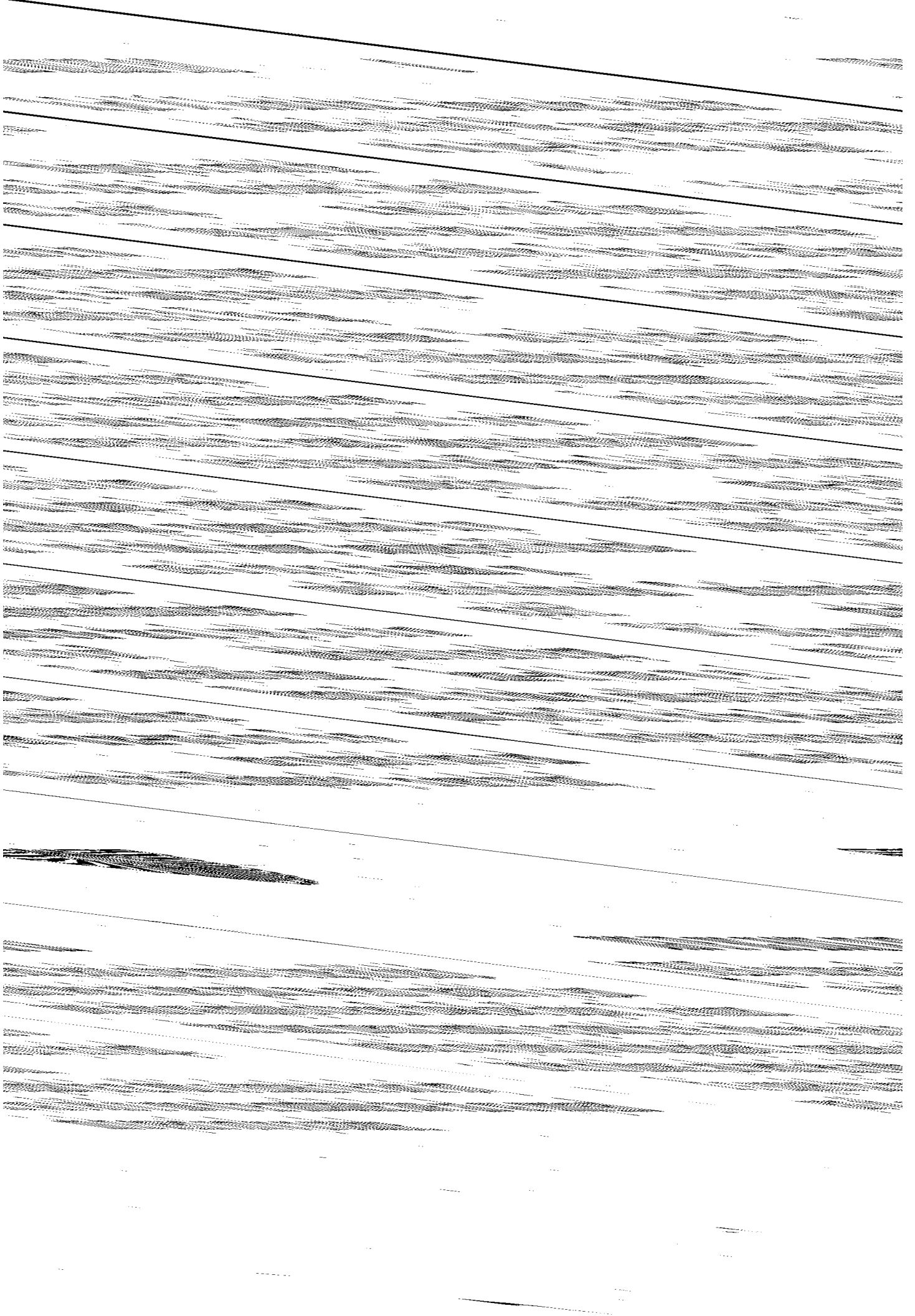
It took but a few minutes to saddle up and start north. For the first two miles of fast riding over the dry, low, hilly country, dotted with cactus and thorny brush, they saw nothing of their man—more than the dust raised by his mount. But as they topped a ridge and looked out on a wide stretch of fairly level country, they saw the dull white stallion and its rider, some six hundred yards ahead.

"That's him!" Higson exulted. "Watch yourselves, though. Don't hit 'er up too fast, or he's liable to git it in his crop that we're after 'im. Our cayuses ain't slouches. Still, that big smoky stallion of his maybe has got the edge on our own stock.

"Here, you follow my lead. We'll pull up on 'im graduallike. Then nab 'im—or drop 'im." So saying, Higson touched his sorrel with the spurs.

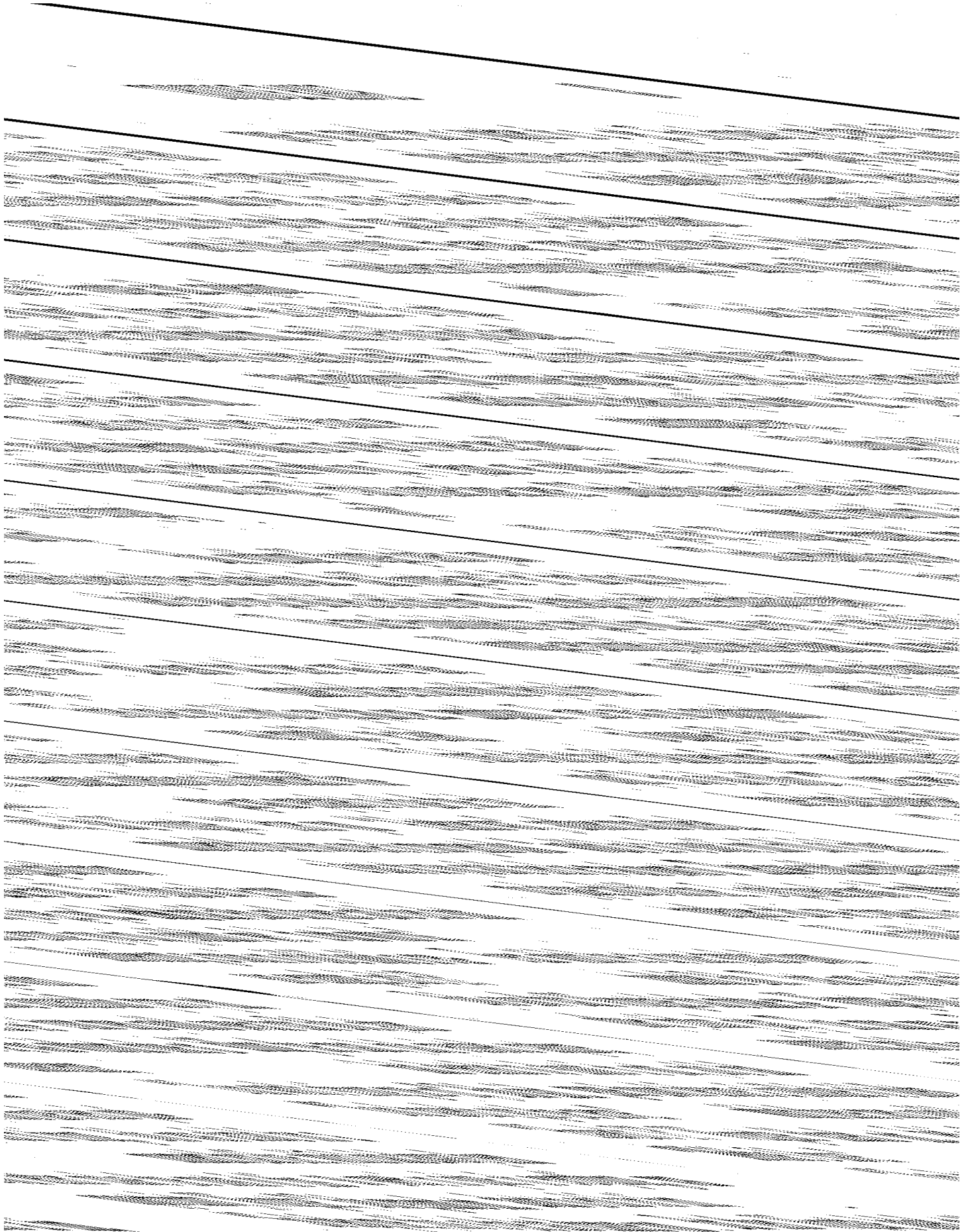
Guardedly as they could under the circumstances, considering that they were in plain sight of their quarry if he looked back, they rode on to the wide, level stretch and continued the pursuit at fairly good speed. Yet so far as they could determine, they were

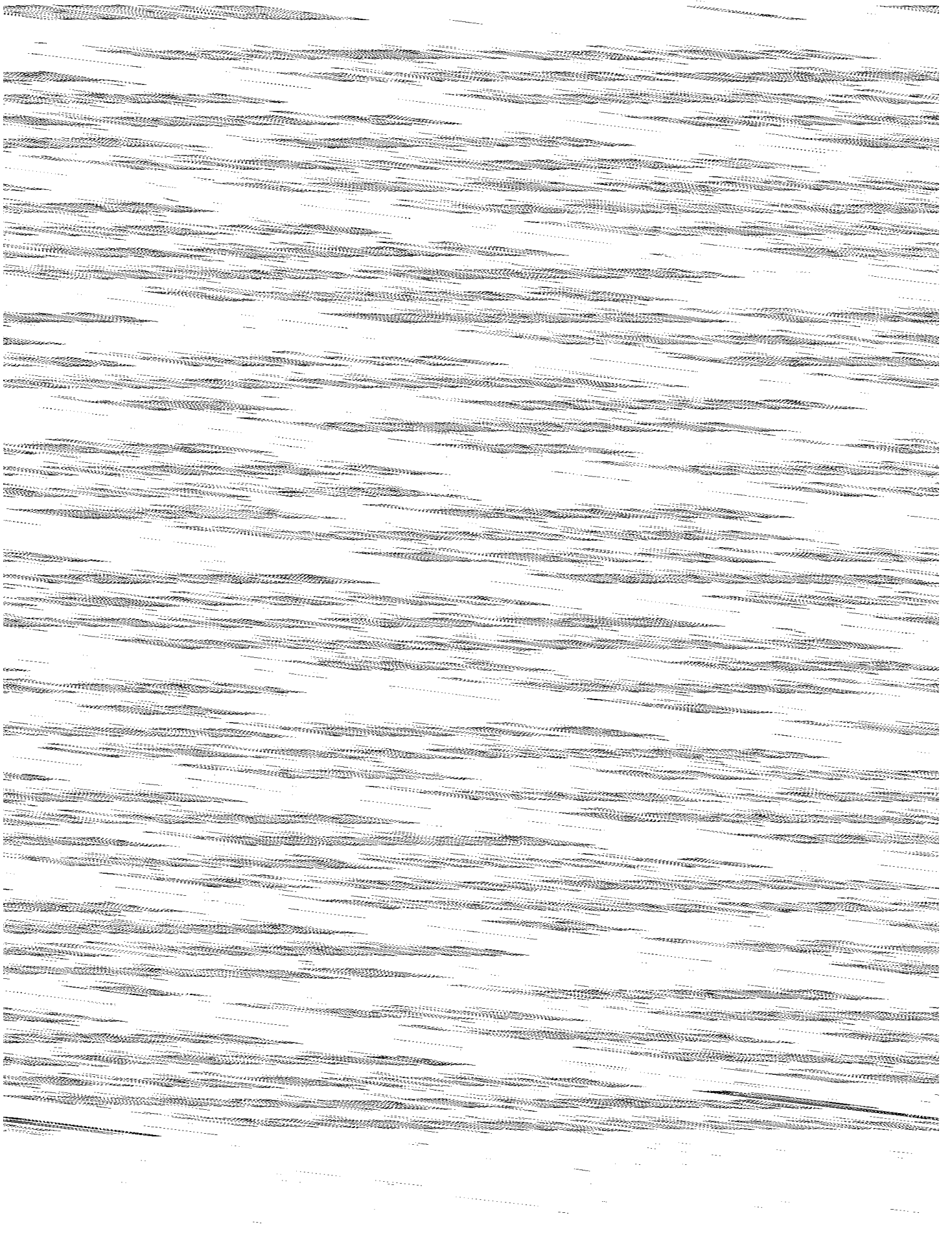






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thought he should be flaming with anger, and he knew that his resolve was all the more deadly because of his coldness.

He rose at length and got back to the chair and sat down in it. He no longer cared what Wingate did. Wingate might strike him again, strike him till he beat him into unconsciousness; but that would make no difference. Wingate did not intend to kill him. He would go on living, and then would come his chance to get even with Wingate.

So he lifted cold, disinterested eyes to Wingate's face. Wingate seemed to be taken aback by what he saw in those eyes. He stared in fascination. But Bob knew that he could always be depended upon to bluff, and now he bluffed.

"You've got enough," he stated. "I can see it in your face. I just wanted to show you what I think of you. I pack a pretty good punch, don't I?"

Bob gave no sign of assent. He had his own thoughts. Everything seemed simple now. He would make Wingate face him alone, and then Wingate should see how good his punch was.

Wingate sat looking at him for a while and then he left the room. The stony expression on Bob's face seemed to puzzle Wingate. He sent two men to guard Bob. In the morning, without offering Bob breakfast, Wingate and three other men started with him for the jail by a roundabout way.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BLACK BOX.

THEY were about halfway to town when they heard a horseman coming behind them. Wingate stopped the men and turned in his saddle. The man drew near to them at a leisurely pace. Bob recognized him as Weaver before Wingate did. Wingate sat his horse, a frown of annoyance between his eyes.

He dropped an oath when he saw who the man was.

"You fellas throw your guns on him when he gets here," he ordered. "I don't know what he thinks he's going to do, but we won't take any chances. He's picked up our trail somehow. Probably went to my place just on a hunch when this guy didn't come home last night."

Weaver came up to them with a grin on his lips. He paid no attention to Wingate and his men, though he must have seen that the men sat with drawn guns.

"Why, hello, Bob," he said. "Where you been all night? I been lookin' all over the country for you. Are you goin' to town? Well, I'll go with you. Come along."

"He won't come along," Wingate said. "He's goin' with us. He's our prisoner."

Weaver stared at him as if he saw him for the first time. His eyes then went to the other men.

"Prisoner?" he repeated. "What you all talkin' about, Wingate? How could you an' this bunch of coyotes of yours make a man like Bob Clifford your prisoner? Come on, Bob. Let's move."

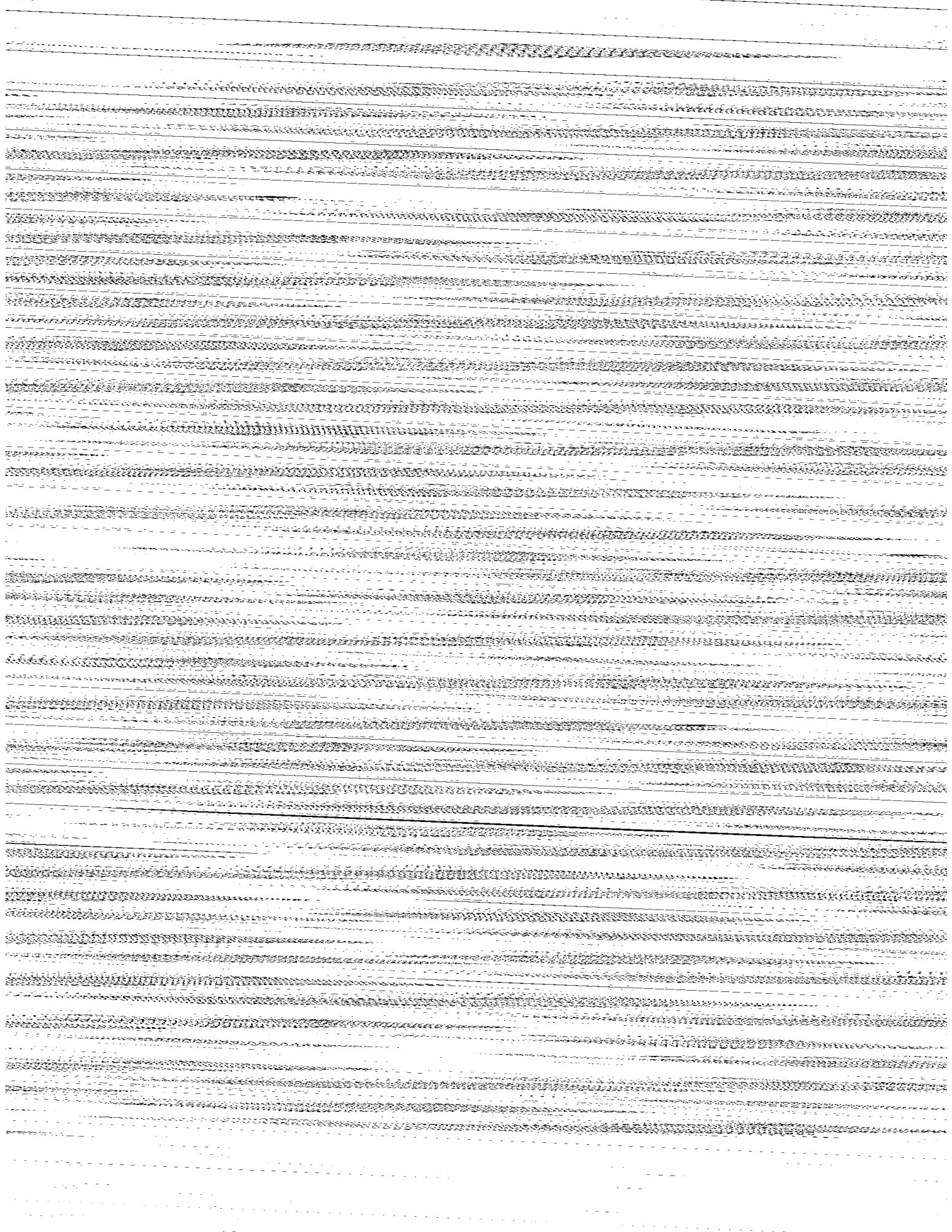
"You got a fine sense of humor, ain't you?" Wingate snarled out. "Well, get out of the way or we'll put you out. You can't interfere in this thing. We're on our way to the county jail."

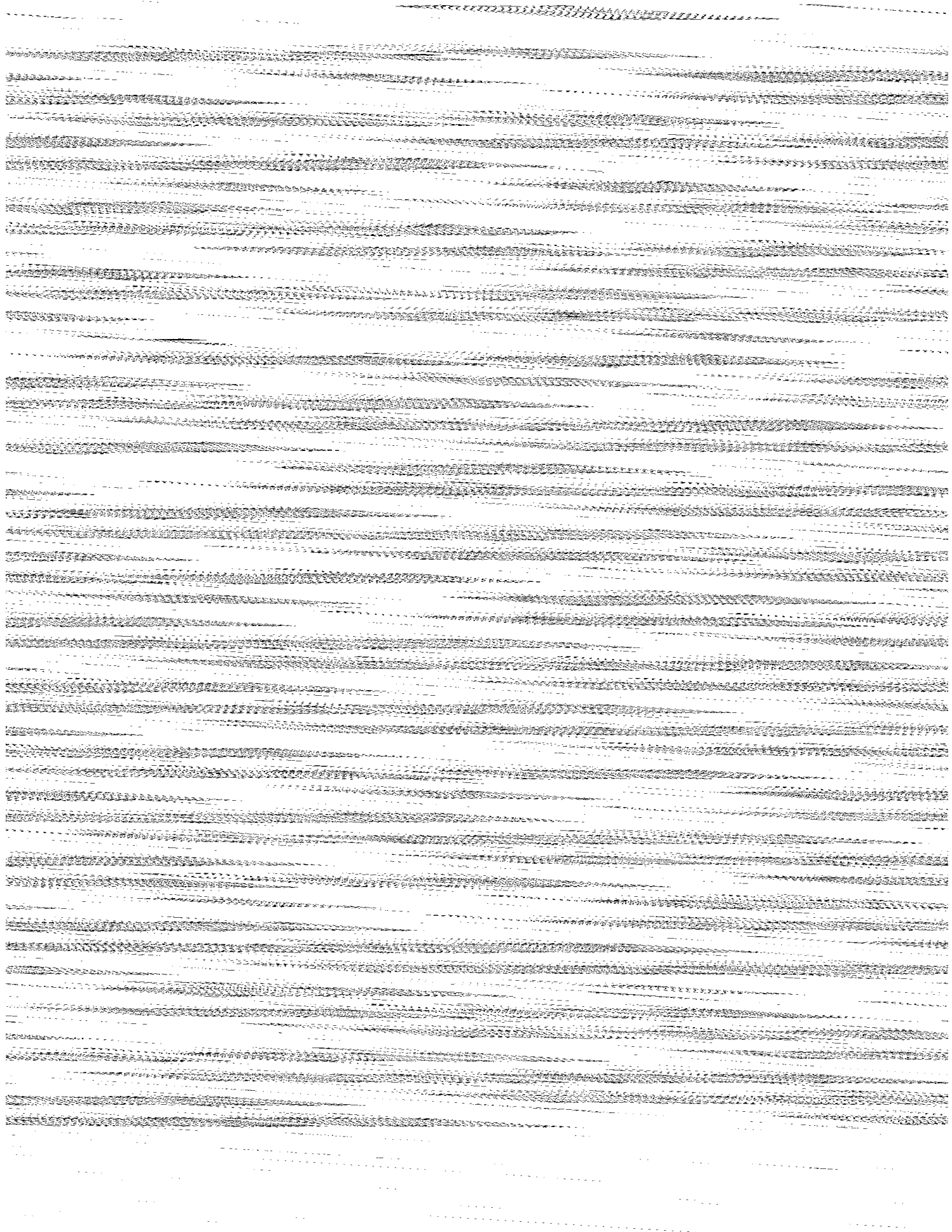
"Oh, I see," said Weaver. "Bein' kind of dumb, I didn't understand. Well, I just go along with you."

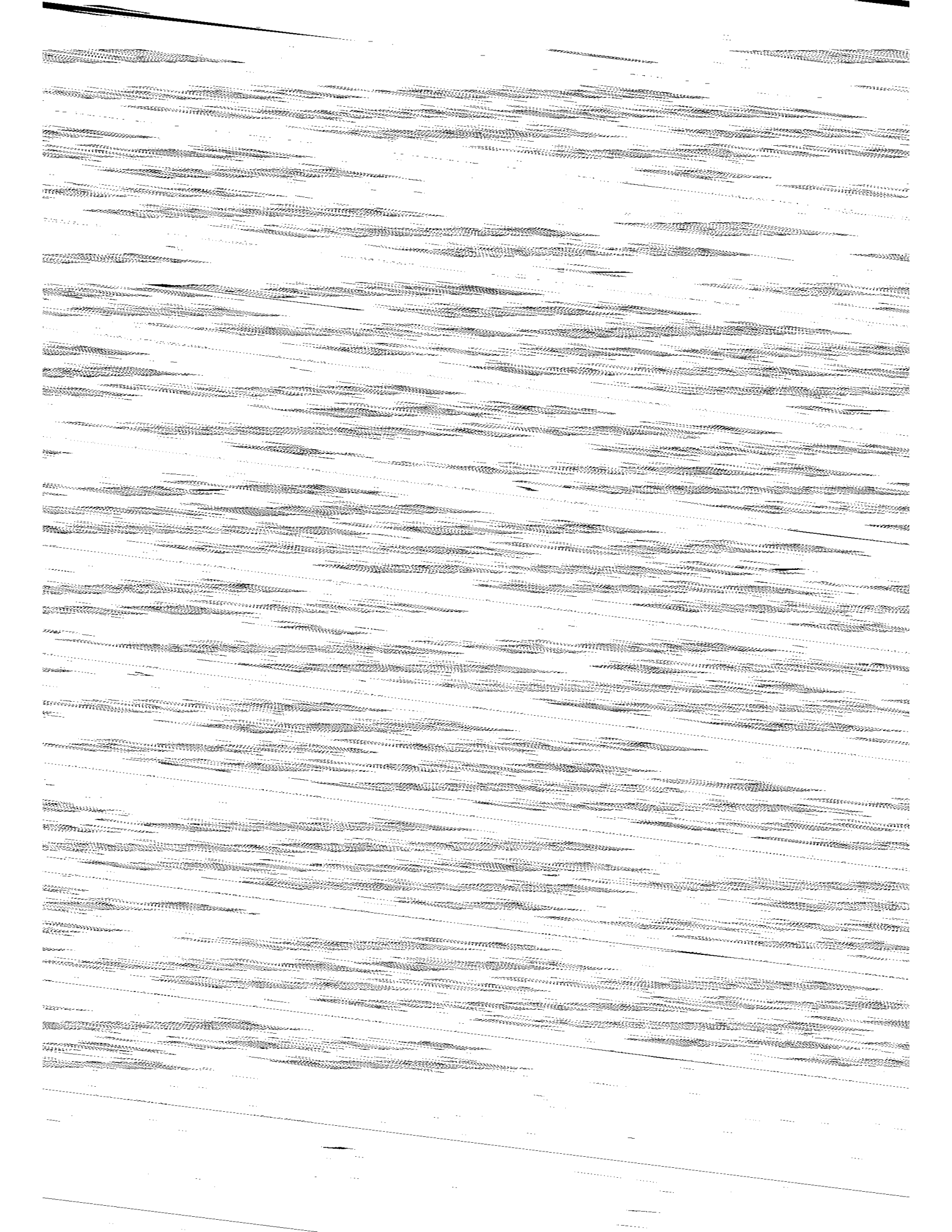
"We don't need your company."

"I'll go ahead of you, then, or I'll go behind you. I'll go any way you want me to go. You can't hardly expect to keep me from goin' to town, can you, Wingate?"

Wingate looked up and down the road. He seemed to think that Weaver was altogether too joyous. Was this a trap? That apparently was what Wingate was debating.







The sheriff studied the man in silence for a space. Then he turned to Wingate.

"This guy's kind of a floatin' kid, I'm thinkin'," he said. "I don't know as his word would stack up any too strong with a jury in this man's country. He your witness?"

"This ain't a grand jury session," Wingate snarled out. "Do you want to hear the story or not? I don't have to tell it to you."

"Why, shoot it," said the sheriff complacently.

"This man was workin' up in the meadows——" Wingate began.

"Herdin' sheep?"

"Yes. He——"

"Oil man, cow-puncher, sheep-herder. Quite a diversified kind of a guy, ain't he?"

"He was doing his work, anyhow," Wingate said. "He was standing a short distance from Clifford when——"

"You mean Bob?"

"Well, Bob. Bob wasn't far away from Pintar when he up and put a bullet into Cooper, who was beyond Pintar. The bullet must have got Cooper in a vital part, for he tumbled over the edge and went bangin' down into the cañon. I expect his body is still there. I thought it best not to disturb it. I thought you ought to go out for it, so you could see from he way it is layin' just how the man tumbled down into the cañon."

"Pintar, you will swear that Bob Clifford fired the bullet that killed that guy, huh?"

"I'll swear to it," Pintar answered, though, under the sheriff's steady scrutiny, his eyes wavered down.

"You was standin' in one place and Cooper was standin' in another and Bob was standin' in a third when Bob just naturally shot Cooper. That it?"

"That's it. I ain't never seen a more cold-blooded crime in all my days."

"And I expect you've seen some," the

sheriff said. "Only two shots was fired?"

"Only two shots."

"'S funny," said the sheriff, "that that guy Campbell insists that there was three shots. He showed me a place where a bullet had freshly buried itself in the logs of the cabin. That's one thing I don't understand."

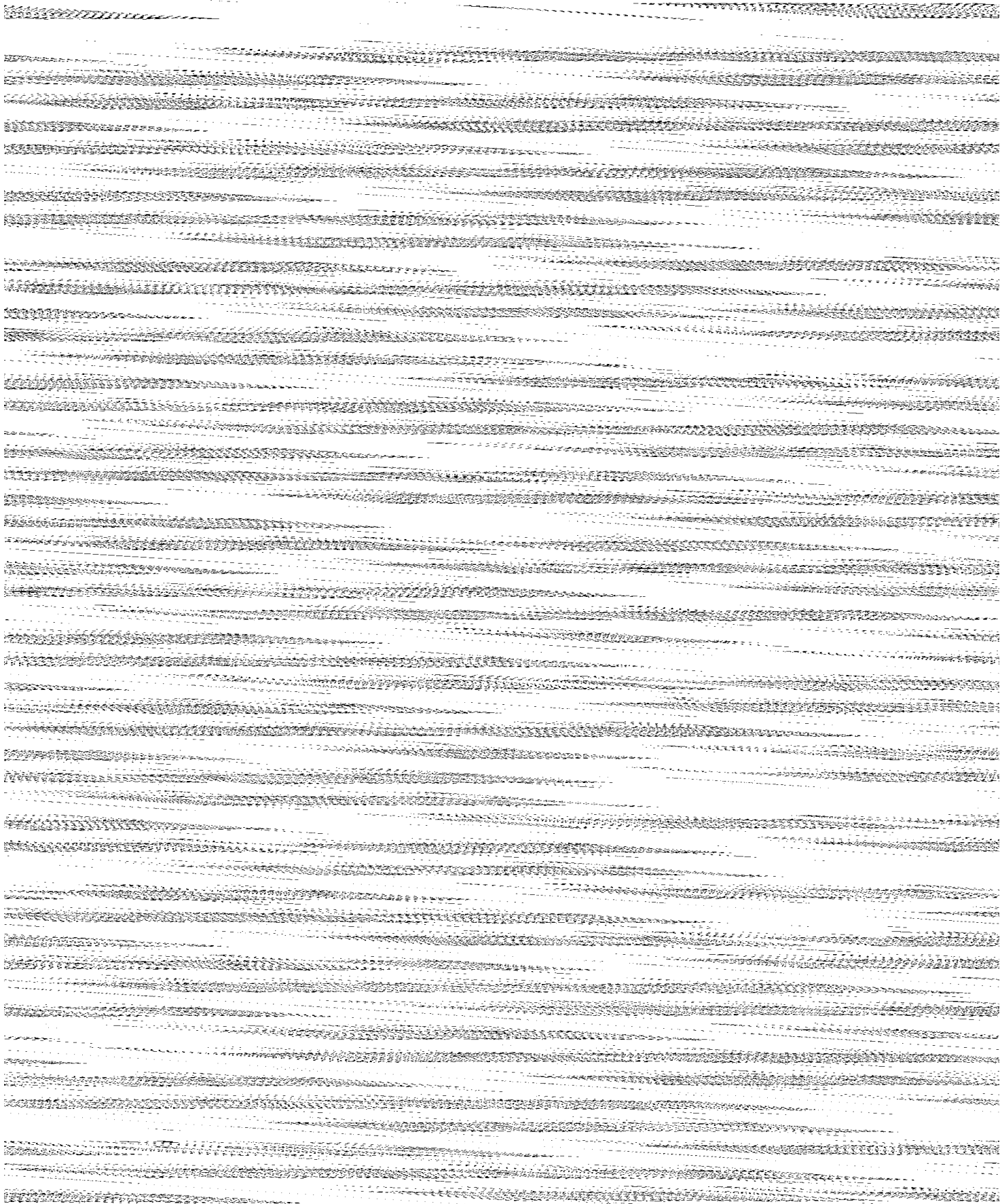
"Campbell told you?" Wingate asked, and Bob saw his face pale a little.

"Yeah," the sheriff went on. "Campbell is a guy that Clifford has up in the meadows. Him and Sam Weaver has been side partners up there. Both Campbell and Weaver states that Bob didn't fire a shot till after somebody else had fired two shots. Bob was up in them meadows all right. Ain't no dispute about that. Weaver was up there, too, but he left before this fracas took place. I dunno what business he was on or how he happened to be coming down toward the road when he caught sight of a man goin' up towards the meadows. This here guy was on the prowl, Weaver said. He said he was goin' along in a kind of a sneakin' way like he had some errand to do that he wouldn't have want shouted from the mountain peaks.

"Well, Weaver he up an' followed him. Weaver is a peculiar cuss that a way. He will butt in on things that he prob'ly ain't got no right to butt in on.

"Right where this guy starts to climb up, there is a stretch of trees, runnin' from the road clean up the top of them hills. If you stand back from it, it looks like a green furrow plowed into the brown of the hillside. Weaver says he told himself that it was funny that this guy was disappearin' in among them trees and then comin' out again like he was dodgin' somethin' when there wasn't nothin' to dodge.

"When he got about halfway up, Weaver lost sight of him altogether. It was night, y'understand, and the seein' wasn't none too good. It kind of



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He understood, as the sheriff had seemed to mean that they should all understand, that Wingate had tried again to blacken his reputation by trickery, and by that trickery to deprive him of his liberty, and so, possibly, to end his life.

Wingate had failed through the intelligence and resourcefulness of Sam Weaver and that other Sam, the sheriff. Yet his failure only increased Bob's loathing of him. If Bob had been locked up on a charge of murder, he would have had to think of that. His rage and resentment then would have had a kind of helplessness—that helplessness which comes to a man of action when he is rendered powerless to act. Now he could think very clearly, and his thinking only served to strengthen his resolution. Sending Weaver to back track over Wingate's old trails became a puerile thing to do. Bob only retained a desire to smash into Wingate and battle with him on the plane on which men battled when they had disputes to settle. As matters were going, Wingate had him at a disadvantage. Wingate could resort to tricks to which Bob could not resort. Bob would never know what the man would do next.

In the little time he had spent here, watching the progress of the game which the sheriff and Wingate had been playing, he had felt his mental horizon lift and widen. Till he had joined the rangers he had hardly had a day of responsibility. The work which he had done on his father's ranch had been whatever work he liked to do. It had chiefly been with the horses. He had an uncanny ability to make horses do his will. He understood them and they seemed to understand him. He could be gentle and firm with them at the same time.

He had been a star at the annual round-up in town. Two years before this autumn he had listened to the plaudits of the vast throng when he had

got a leg up on the trophy. He had not been able to follow up his success because he had been in the service when the next round-up was held, but he had meant to come to the show this year. There was a horse, now ranging somewhere in the horse-heaven country, which no man had kept seat upon. He had been going to try again with that horse. He often dreamed of the stir and the bustle and the movement and the color of the show, when the town's population would be increased tenfold by the great influx of visitors.

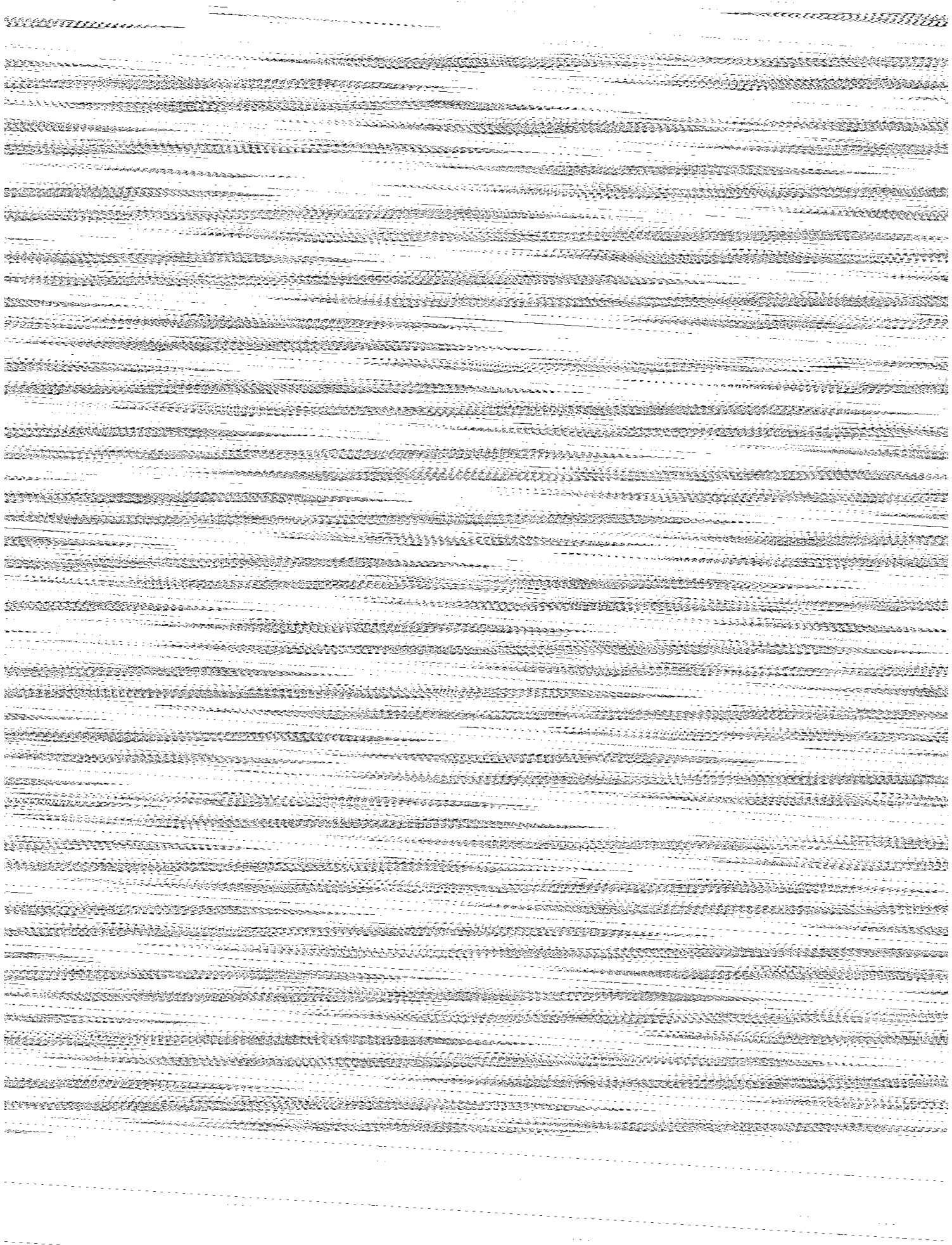
But all this seemed as nothing now. Indeed something of vaster value, of greater significance in his life, appeared to have passed out of his consciousness. That was his love for Mona MacLaren. He had once thought that nothing could thrust that aside, but now his hate for Wingate had even shouldered that out of the field of his emotions. He was a man with but a single purpose, and therefore he was a dangerous man. For the first time in his life he had a complete obsession, and that was to get his hands on the man he despised.

This was Bob's mood as the sheriff ceased speaking, and Bob turned to Wingate, rather idly, to see what he would do. He would lie, evade, accuse anew; it made no difference. Nothing he could say or do now would make any difference.

Wingate seemed to see that he must act swiftly. His eyes had widened as he had heard the sheriff come to his climax, and now he turned those wide eyes on Pintar.

"How is this?" he asked thickly.

Bob switched his eyes to Pintar's face, and he was amused by the incredulous look which swept into Pintar's dull eyes. The man hadn't much intelligence. Wingate must be depending upon Pintar's fear of him to prevent Pintar from blurting out the truth. And so it seemed to be. Pintar, for a time, struggled with his amazement, but at



more? Whyn't you gettin' up a posse, Sam, and findin' out about all this here undercover work?" You want some of that, Wingate? You want a couple score of them men ridin' through the country with guns slung on them? It has been quite a spell since such a thing has took place hereabouts, but when it does take place, it means a little bit of red Hades. You get them old fellas stirred up, get their blood to runnin' like it used to run in the old days when things wasn't so ca'm an' sweet as they generally are now, and you will see everything tore up by its roots before they get through."

Through this philippic Wingate had shifted from one foot to the other, and his face had paled slowly till now, beneath its tan, it held a sick look.

"I will do what I can to see that no harm comes to your man," he said. "Is that all?"

"It's all I got to say," the sheriff answered, wiping his bald head. "You got any charge to make against this man or Pintar, Bob?"

"None!"

The question had startled Bob. Everything had been going just as he wanted it to go. Oh, no, he did not want to disturb the smooth running of events by making any charges against Wingate. He wanted Wingate to walk out of the jail a free man. Therefore the word had shot from his lips with more emphasis than he had meant to put upon it.

Wingate turned and stared at him, as if he sought to gather from his rejection of the sheriff's invitation what he had in his mind. He might think, Bob saw, that Bob was so glad that he himself was to escape that he would freely let the whole matter drop. Let him think that if he liked! So Bob evaded his glance and looked out of the window, giving Wingate an opportunity to study his face without having to meet Bob's eyes. A little smile which might

mean anything played across Bob's lips.

"Come on, Pintar," Wingate said.

"My man will be up to your place this afternoon," the sheriff said. "Take good care of him."

Wingate said nothing more. He and Pintar went on into the street.

"You got a deck of cards up to your place, ain't you, Jake?" the sheriff asked Bob's father.

"Why, yes."

"When my two boys gets up there give them the deck of cards an' put 'em in the bunk house," the sheriff said. "They will be right there, playin' cards, any time you want them."

"All right, Sam," Clifford said. "Let's get along, Bob."

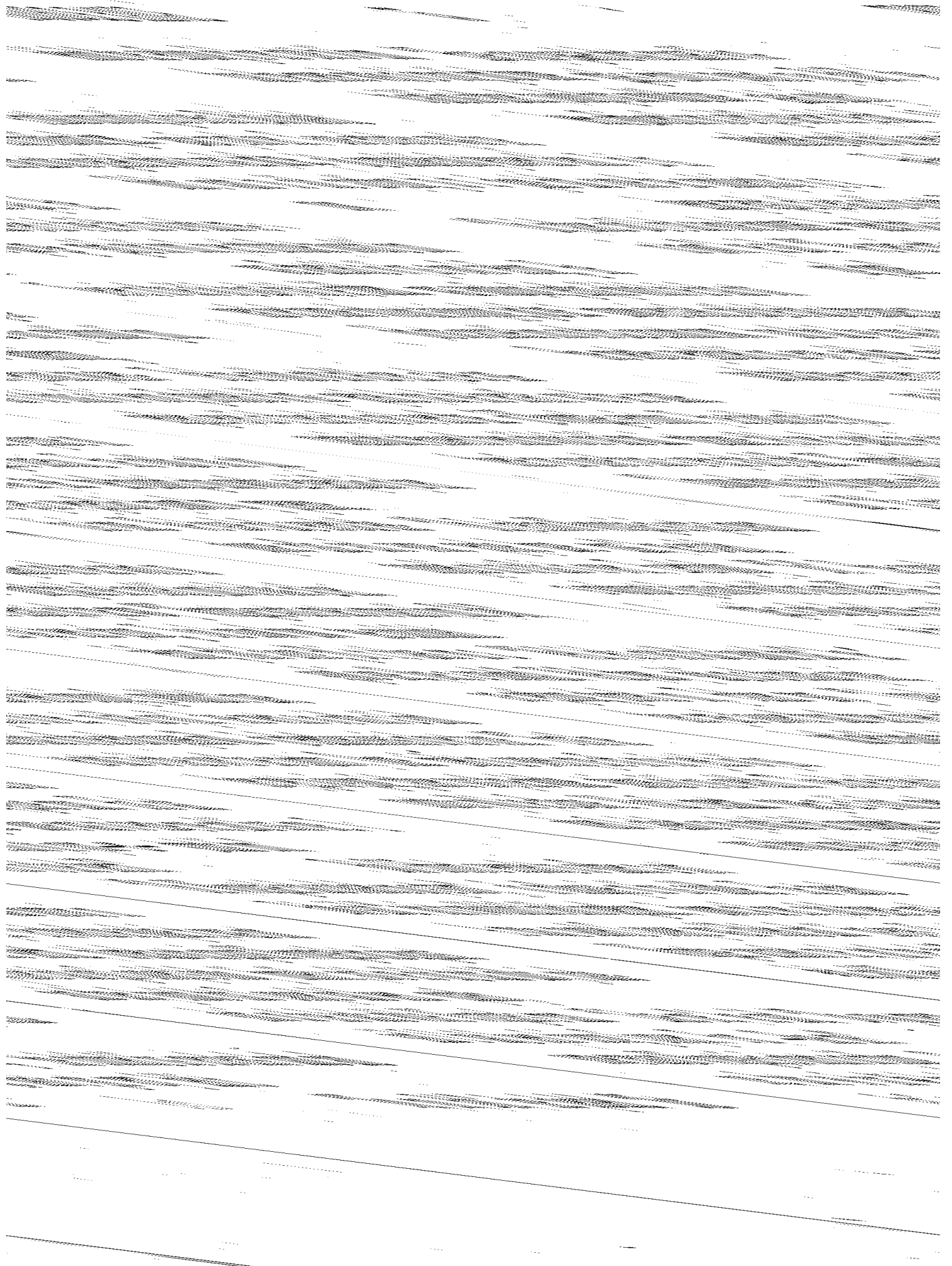
"Where did Weaver go?" Bob asked, outside.

"Why, he went to Oklahoma on that errand of yours," Clifford answered. "He said you wanted him to go, and I give him the money. He had just about time to catch a train for Portland after he took Wingate's picture."

It was an unnecessary expense, Bob knew, but it didn't matter. They started toward home in silence, and maintained the silence till they came to MacLaren's ranch. Bob did not want to see Mona in his present mood, and he spurred forward, with his father following him, as they were about to pass the house. Apparently, however, Mona had known they were at least in town and had been watching for their return. She ran toward them from the kitchen and hailed Bob. He could do no less than stop. Clifford rode on out of earshot and waited for Bob.

"What has happened, Bob?" Mona asked, and though her tone was quiet, Bob saw that it was so only through an effort of her will.

As always, Bob's impulse toward her was to spare her. He had seen that she had something on her mind. Since he had decided that there had been more



like you. That—that was different. You and I—we had known each other so long.”

She looked as if she were going to burst into tears, and he had never seen her cry even when, a little girl, she had suffered the slight injuries which play-time brings. She was tearing him to pieces, so great was his affection for her. He had suffered because he had once given way to an impulse, an impulse which, God knew, had had no taint in it, but which she had cruelly misunderstood.

But even now, with a rare sense of justice, he would take no solace from the fact of her setting him apart. He thought she was only being lenient in the stress of the moment. He would not recall to her that she had passionately declared she hated him, never wanted to see him again; that he had ruthlessly torn down the fine structure of their friendship.

So he put that away and reacted at once, with all the power of no slight nature, to what she accused Wingate of.

“Never mind,” he said. “I’m sorry you *had* to tell me, but I’m glad you did tell me. I—I will make sure that Wingate doesn’t do it again. I see that was one of the reasons you called me back home. Wasn’t that one of the reasons?”

“There were so many reasons why you should be here,” she said.

He forced himself to calmness. About her he threw the mantle of his protection, as he had thrown it ever since either of them could remember. A picture of her as a little girl in short dresses, with flying, jet black hair, came to him.

“Well, never mind, Mona,” he said. “Don’t think anything more about this guy. He won’t be hard to handle. Coward at bottom, you know. He’s been makin’ some desperate plays, but we will throw a rope on him now and

tie him up. Nothing to worry about. Not a thing. You just forget it!”

She had had, in those old days, a queer way of flashing out at him and telling him what she thought of him. Those had been the slight storms which had made the fair weather of their friendship seem all the brighter. She flashed out at him now.

“I’m not thinking about myself,” she said. “I’m thinking about you. I brought you back here, and in that way I’m responsible. You are in danger. You will have to look sharp to protect yourself. You can’t fight this out alone. What are you going to do about that?”

Well, he’d be dogged if his luck wasn’t holding. This here Sheriff Sam was a wise old head, now, wasn’t he? He had fixed things, all unwillingly, so that Bob could meet this situation and still go on as he had planned.

“Oh, that’s all taken care of, Mona,” he said with a smile. “The sheriff has got tired of all these ructions and he has taken a hand. He is sending two men out to our place this afternoon and one man to Wingate’s. Neither side will be able to make a move from now on without the sheriff’s knowin’ about it. That’ll satisfy you, won’t it?”

What she thought he did not know. She kept her eyes on his face for a space before she turned back toward the house.

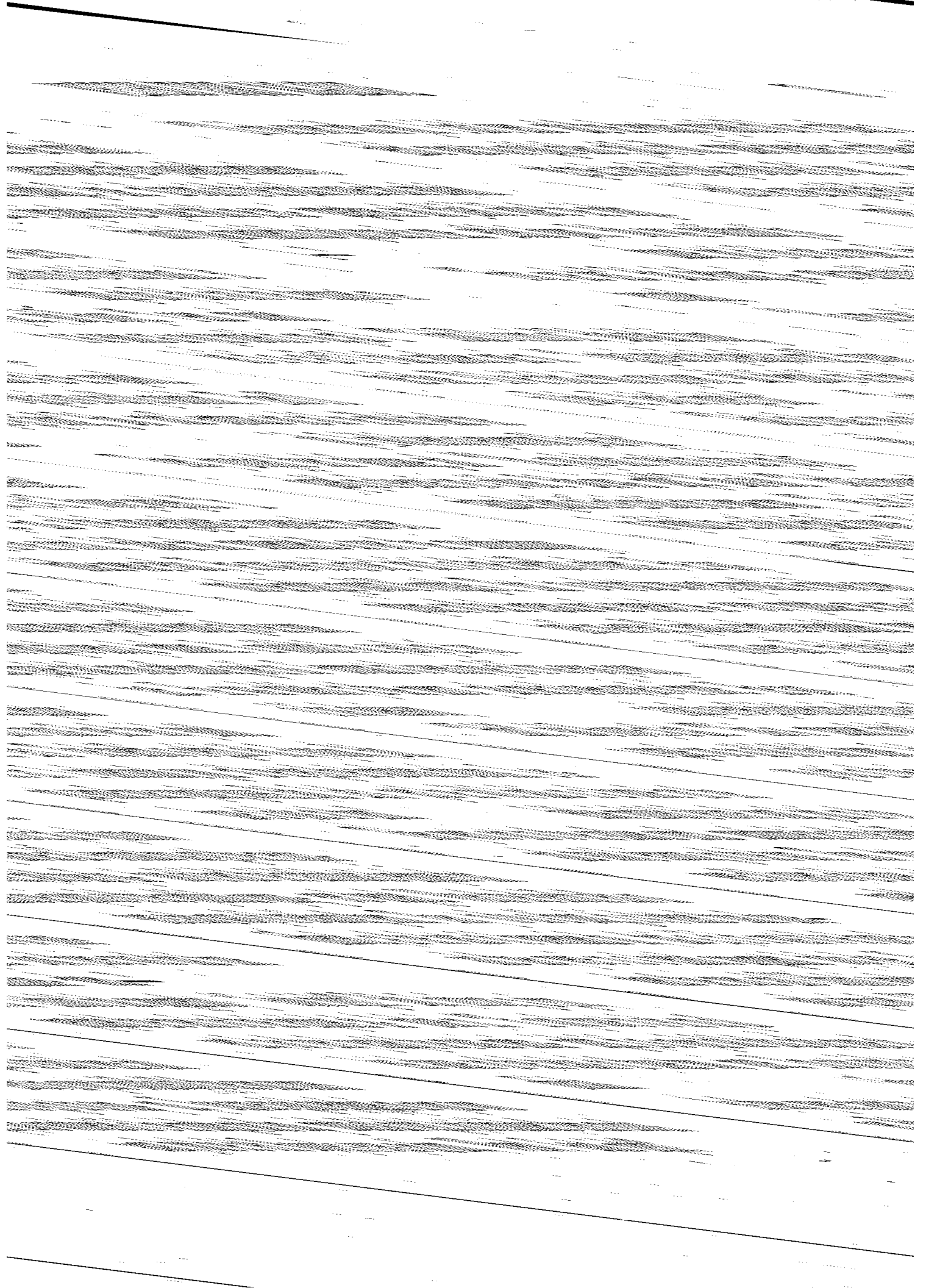
“Bob,” she said, “be careful, won’t you?”

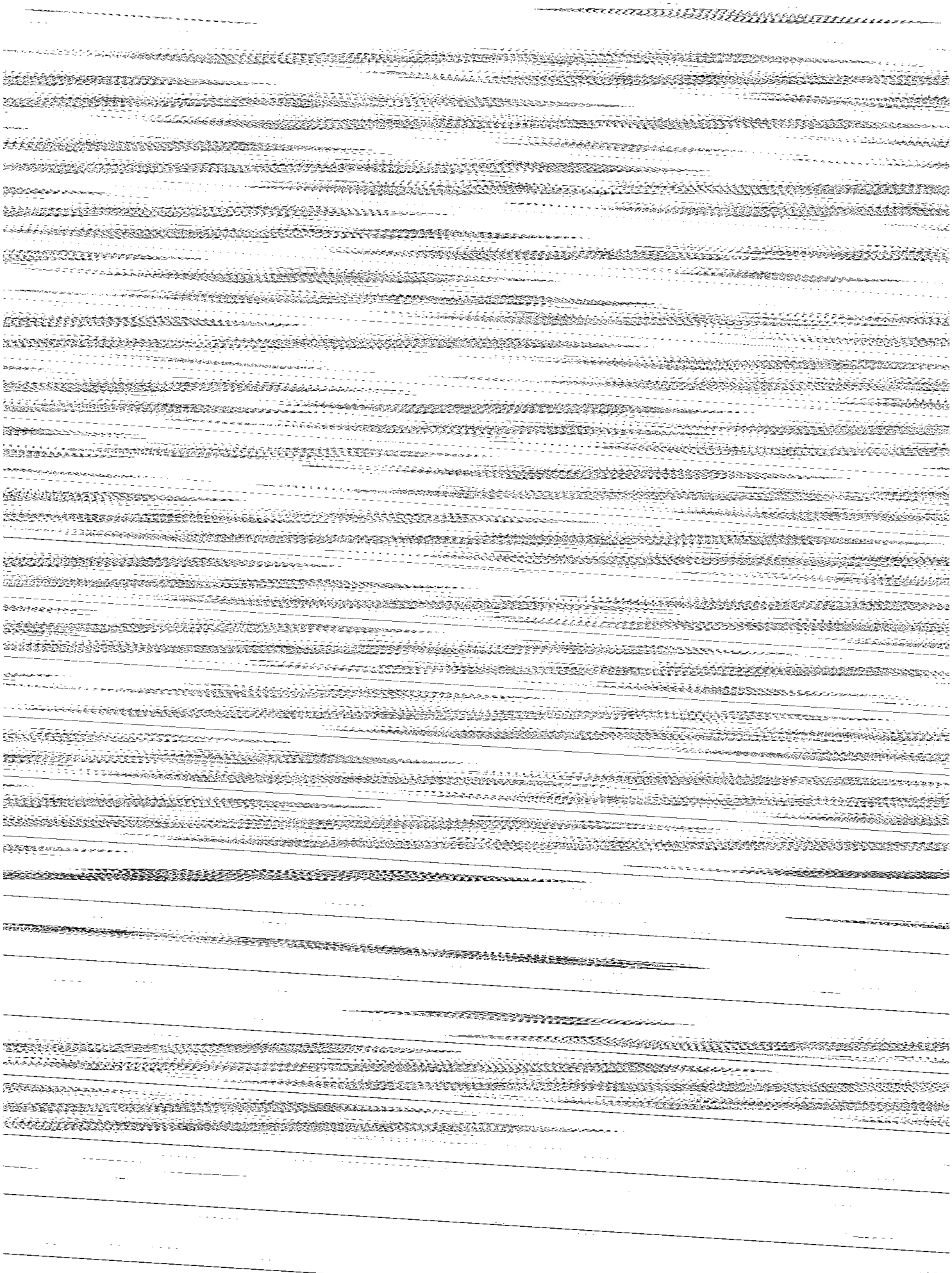
“I’ll be careful,” he said.

He watched her till she gained the door and half expected she would turn there to wave her hand as had been her custom. But she only went on into the house.

“Gosh,” said Bob Clifford to himself. “I wonder if I was to ride straight for the next ten-twenty years if I could get her back to where her and me used to be. I wonder! I’d be willin’ to wait!”

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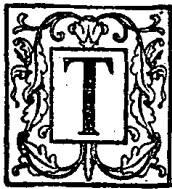




Sunflower Gold

By *Reginald C. Barker*

Author of "Grizzly Gallagher, Santa Claus," etc.



EDDY BLAINE was busily splitting wood, and his wife, Hattie, was sowing seeds in the little patch of ground she devoted to the raising of flowers, when, early one morning, Grizzly Gallagher arrived at their little homestead at Lake-where-the-wind-never-blows.

"The winter is over," said Grizzly Gallagher. "The snow is gone and the chirp of the chickadee has given place to song of running water, for spring is here. How's the baby?"

"For the love of Mike, moderate that great voice of yours," implored Teddy. "Do you want to wake him up?"

"Sure do," beamed the old trapper. "Ain't seen him since he was knee high to a snowshoe rabbit. What do you suppose I came over for?"

"Probably so's you'd get a good square meal again," said Teddy, grinning, and laying down his ax. "Got a good excuse to show up now that the baby has arrived; haven't you?"

"I've got a better one, this time," announced Grizzly Gallagher mysteriously. "I've brought a present for Hattie. Something I've been saving up for a couple of years, but which I'd almost forgot. Guess."

"Smoked bear meat," hazarded Teddy.

"Always thinkin' of your stomach, ain't you, Teddy?" answered the old trapper. "But at that, you're wrong."

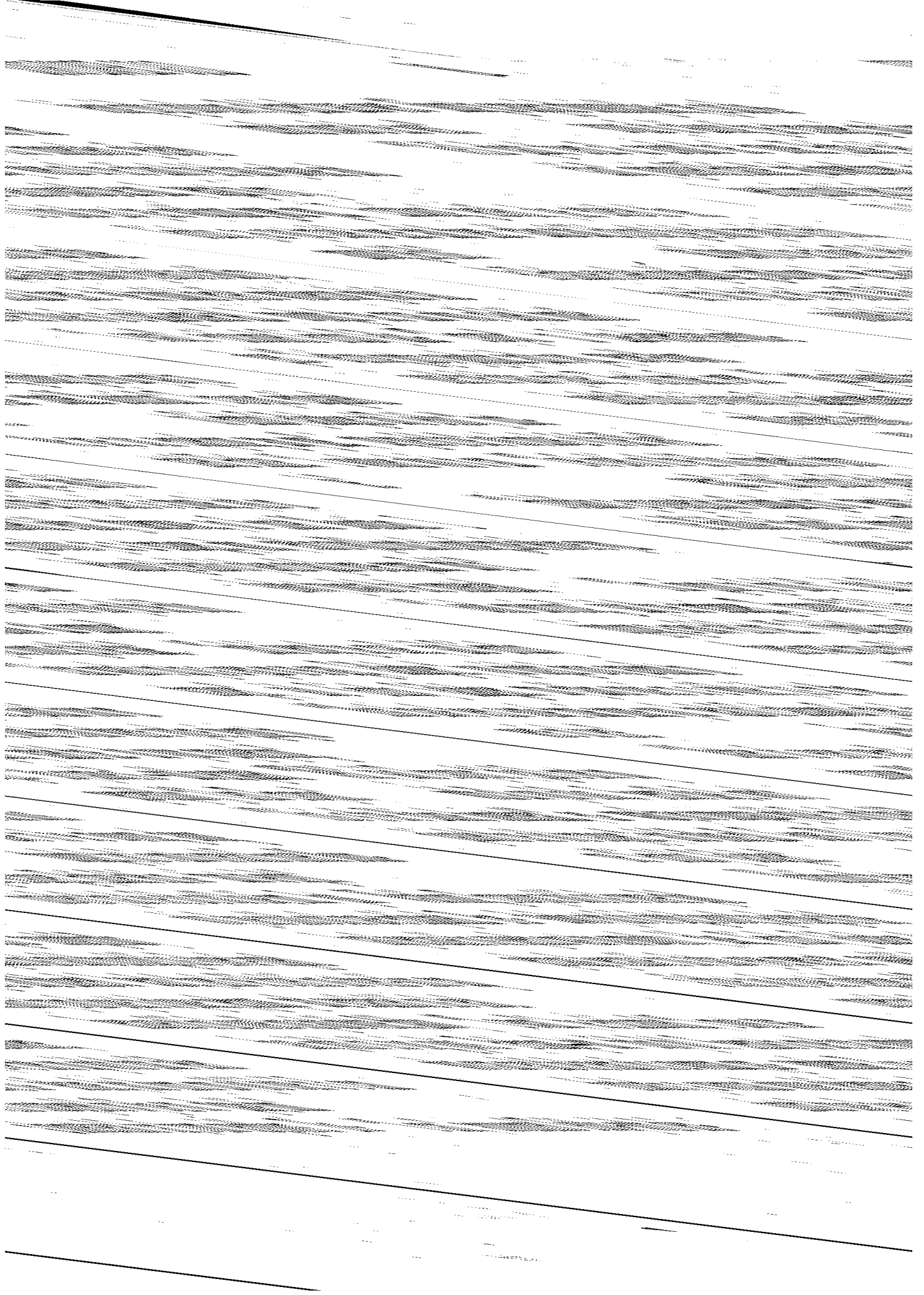
"I'll bet Grizzly found a little gold nugget for the baby," said Hattie. "He promised that he would go over to the old diggings on Carson's Luck and try to find one."

"The gold I've got is of a kind I never before found in all my forty-odd years in the big hills," said Grizzly, "and if any one had told me that I ever would find it, I wouldn't have believed 'em."

Fumbling in a pocket of his Mackinaw, he brought forth a small cotton sack and handed it to Hattie. Eagerly she untied the string of the sack and looked inside. It was half full of silver-gray seeds, each of the shape and about half the size of a bean, with a tiny white stripe running around the edge.

"Sunflower seeds!" she cried delightedly. "Why, Grizzly, mother must have sent them to me; for she is the only one in McCall that grows sunflowers."

"Wrong again," said Grizzly. "I found six or seven big sunflowers growing wild on the west slope of Sunset Mountain. How they came thar, the good Lord only knows. Maybe a bird carried the seeds, or maybe some wandering prospector had 'em with him and lost 'em. Anyhow, thar they stood, and



sion. "I'm not likely to forget where I saw him. I was a school boy at the time, and one day just as school let out, Sheriff Mahoney came riding past with a man handcuffed to his stirrup. And the man was he who calls himself Clem Traynor."

"I swan!" exclaimed Grizzly Gallagher again. "That's sure a thing a boy wouldn't be likely to forget. I remember him myself now. The name he went by then was 'Gentleman Casper.' He robbed the paymaster of the Golden Grubstake Mine of fifty thousand dollars. Arrested by Sheriff Mahoney, he was sentenced to serve ten years in the State Penitentiary at Boise City. But they never recovered the gold."

"I'll bet Traynor, or Casper, or whatever his name is," said Teddy, "has come back to get the gold he stole, and that is the lost mine he expects to find on Sunset Mountain."

"I swan!" exclaimed Grizzly Gallagher. "I most sartinly do! Little did I think when I found those sunflowers that right then I was walking on buried gold."

"You think then," asked Teddy, "that he sowed the sunflower seed over the place where the gold was buried?"

"Sure he did," said Grizzly, "to mark the place. But it was surely luck that any of 'em remained after so long, for animals and birds have a powerful liking for the oily rich seeds of the sunflower."

Quietly Hattie joined them as they stood discussing the matter.

"Mother gave that man the sunflower seeds," she said. "I've often heard her tell the story of Gentleman Casper, and how sometimes he used to eat a meal at the restaurant she is running down at McCall."

"I swan!" exclaimed Grizzly Gallagher. "I most sartinly do!"

"What shall we do?" asked Teddy. "Go and inform Sheriff Mahoney?"

"Better than that," said Grizzly Gallagher. "I know just where I found

those sunflowers. I'll go thar and dig up the gold and return it to the owners of the Golden Grubstake Mine."

"Suppose Traynor beats you to it, Grizzly?" objected Hattie.

"He may beat me to it," agreed Grizzly Gallagher, "but not being a woodsman, he'll have a hard time locating himself now that the sunflowers are gone."

"He'll find the stems," said Teddy.

"After two years?" scoffed Grizzly Gallagher. "Thar ain't been a sunflower grow thar since I found that seed, for each year I've been back to see."

"If I were you," suggested Hattie, "I'd watch out for Traynor; for I believe he would kill you if he thought you had found the gold."

"I'll be watching," promised Grizzly, "and if I don't show up here once in a while, you'd better send the sheriff to look me up. So-long. Take care of the baby."

Hand in hand Teddy Blaine and his wife stood looking after the old trapper as he strode around the edge of the lake, finally to disappear from sight among the sheltering pines.

"It would be a terrible thing if anything should happen to him," said Hattie fearfully. "He's the best friend we've got."

"Aye," agreed Teddy. "The mountains will never seem the same to us again when Grizzly Gallagher dies."

On the summit of Sunset Mountain, facing the west, is a sheer wall of gray granite three hundred feet in height. For centuries untold the face of this cliff has been caving beneath the crushing grip of the fingers of the frost, and the trickling waters of the spring behind the fissured rock. So from the foot of the cliff extending nearly halfway down the west slope of the mountain, is a great sea of granite fragments piled in indescribable chaos.

For the most part the huge masses of

granite have been shattered in their fall to pieces weighing forty or fifty pounds apiece; but here and there, bridging twelve or fourteen square yards of rubble, is a great slab, which, harder than the rest, has remained intact. Sticking out from beneath many of these fragments one can see piles of cut grass and weeds, the result of the labors of the pika, or little chief hare, a tailless animal, in size and appearance something like a gray guinea pig—if guinea pigs are ever gray—whose color blends so perfectly with his surroundings that were it not for his sharp whistle of alarm he would remain invisible.

At the foot of the talus, or rock slide, extending nearly to the base of the mountain, is an open "park," covered in the summer with tufts of bunch grass, upon which deer come to browse and beneath many of which blue grouse build their nests.

It was in this open glade that Grizzly Gallagher had found the sunflowers growing at widely spaced distances, the natural result of the few remaining seeds having been scattered by winds and birds.

Here he expected to find the gold buried by Traynor, alias Gentleman Casper, if it had not already been recovered by the man who had placed it there.

Two days had elapsed since Grizzly Gallagher had left the Blaine homestead, and during that time he had not seen any sign of Traynor; but in the dawn of the third morning the old trapper found his camp on the bank of a little creek that circled the base of Sunset Mountain. By this Grizzly Gallagher reasoned that, so far, Traynor's search for the gold had been fruitless.

"Guess I'll climb the east side of old Sunset," murmured Grizzly Gallagher into his silver-tipped beard, "and from the summit I'll see what is to be seen."

Two hours later he peered cautiously over the edge of the great cliff, beneath which lay the west side of the mountain.

It had not yet been reached by the sun. From where he lay the old trapper could see the open place where, at the foot of the great slide, the sunflowers had grown; it was empty of life and undisturbed by the marks of shovel or pick.

"I swan," murmured the old trapper. "I most sartinly do! That varmint is surely taking his time about looking for his gold."

As Grizzly Gallagher ceased speaking, a sudden clatter below the cliff caused him to transfer his gaze to the great rock slide. Here and there a rock was moving, slowly, slowly; then more rocks moved and more and more; and heaved out by the pressure, a huge slab reared up, toppled over, and went crashing down on top of a section of the slide that was slowly moving down Sunset Mountain.

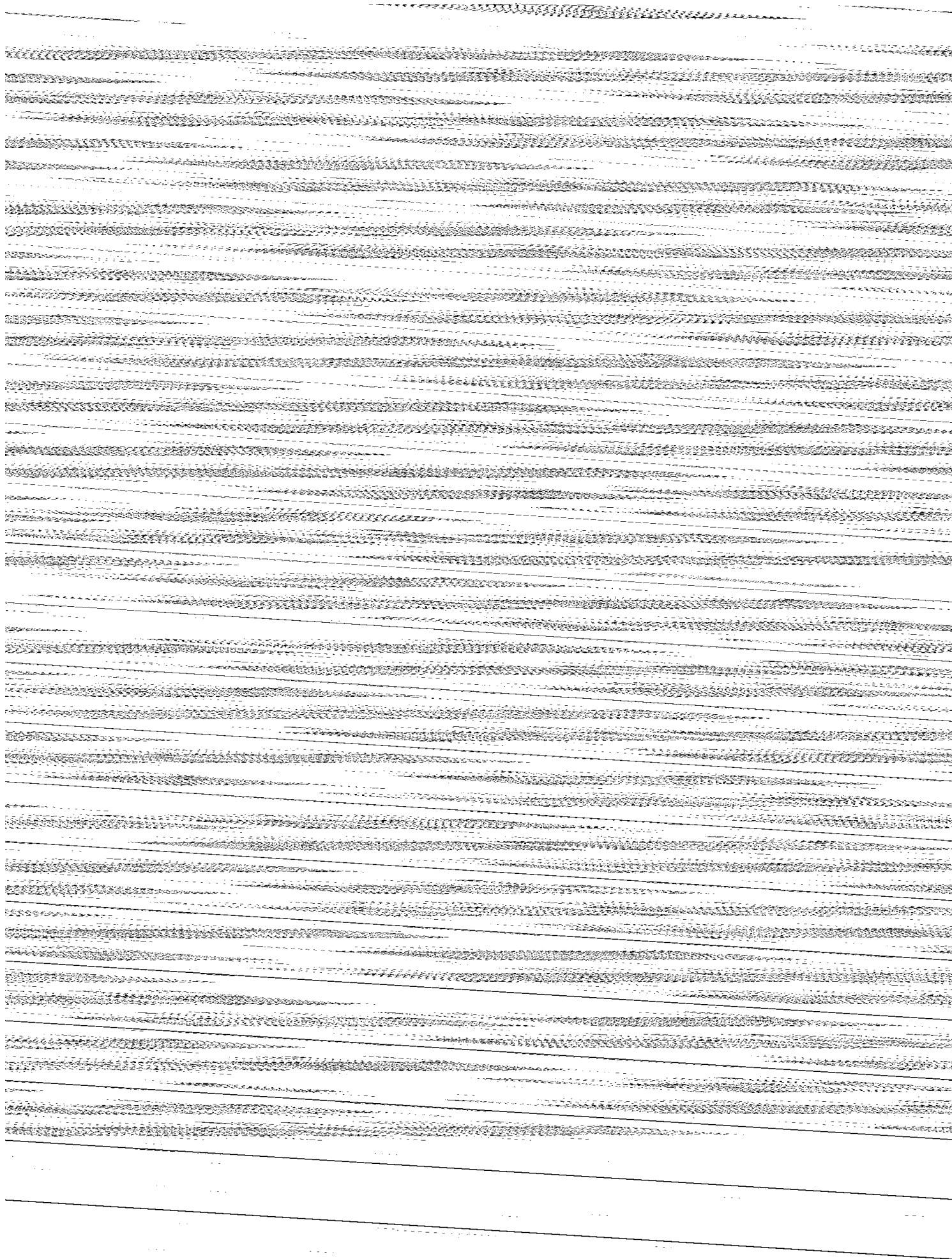
"I swan!" exclaimed Grizzly Gallagher. "Something surely started that slide." As he peered more closely he saw a man standing on the talus above where the slide was still moving. For a moment Traynor stood there, leaning on an iron bar. Then he deliberately pried loose another fragment of granite and, with a preliminary grinding noise, another section of the talus slid slowly down the mountain to come to rest at last in a cloud of dust.

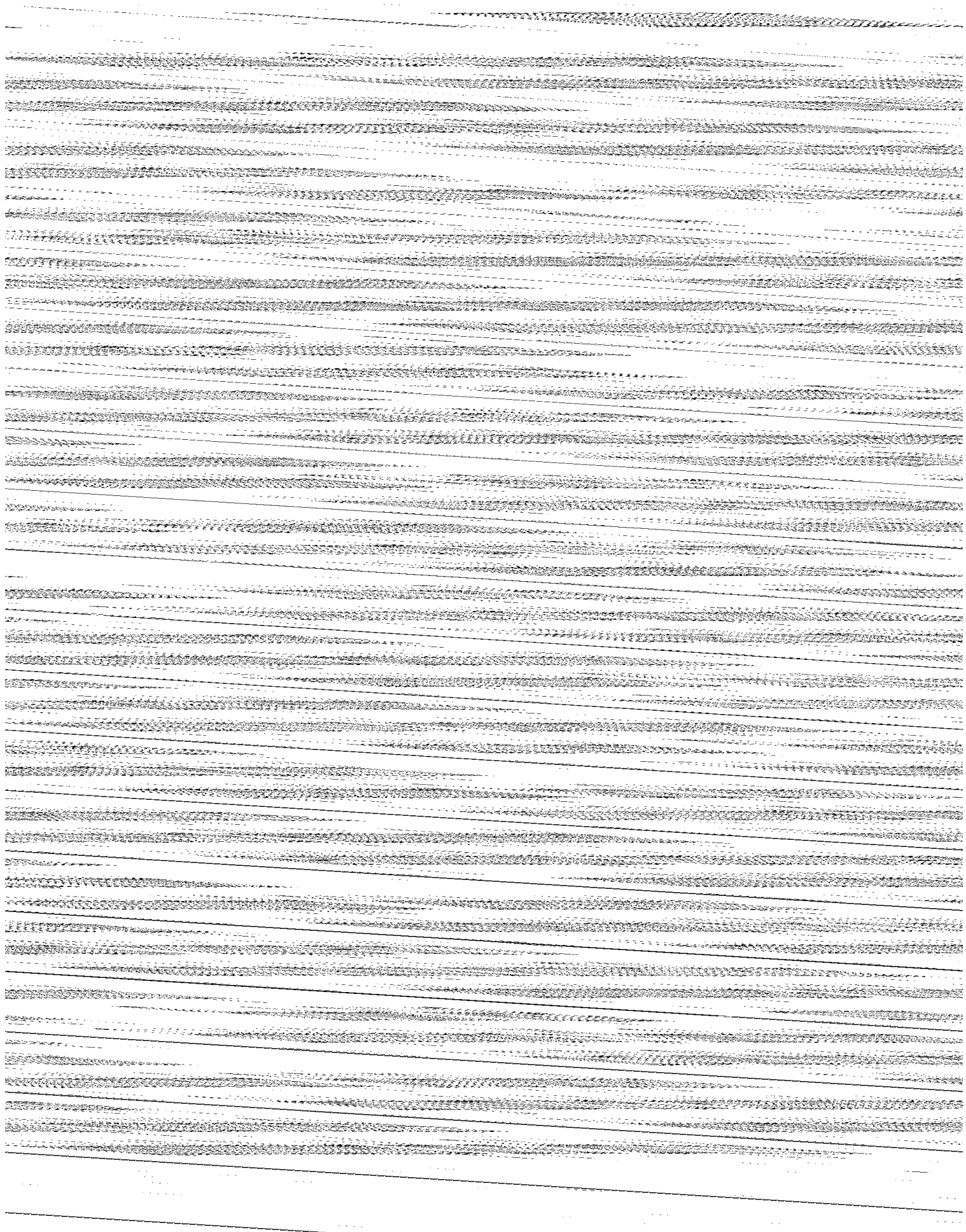
Slowly there drifted up to the nostrils of Grizzly Gallagher a sulphurous smell caused by the friction of the grinding rocks; then all was still for a moment, until the silence was broken by the whistle of a little chief hare.

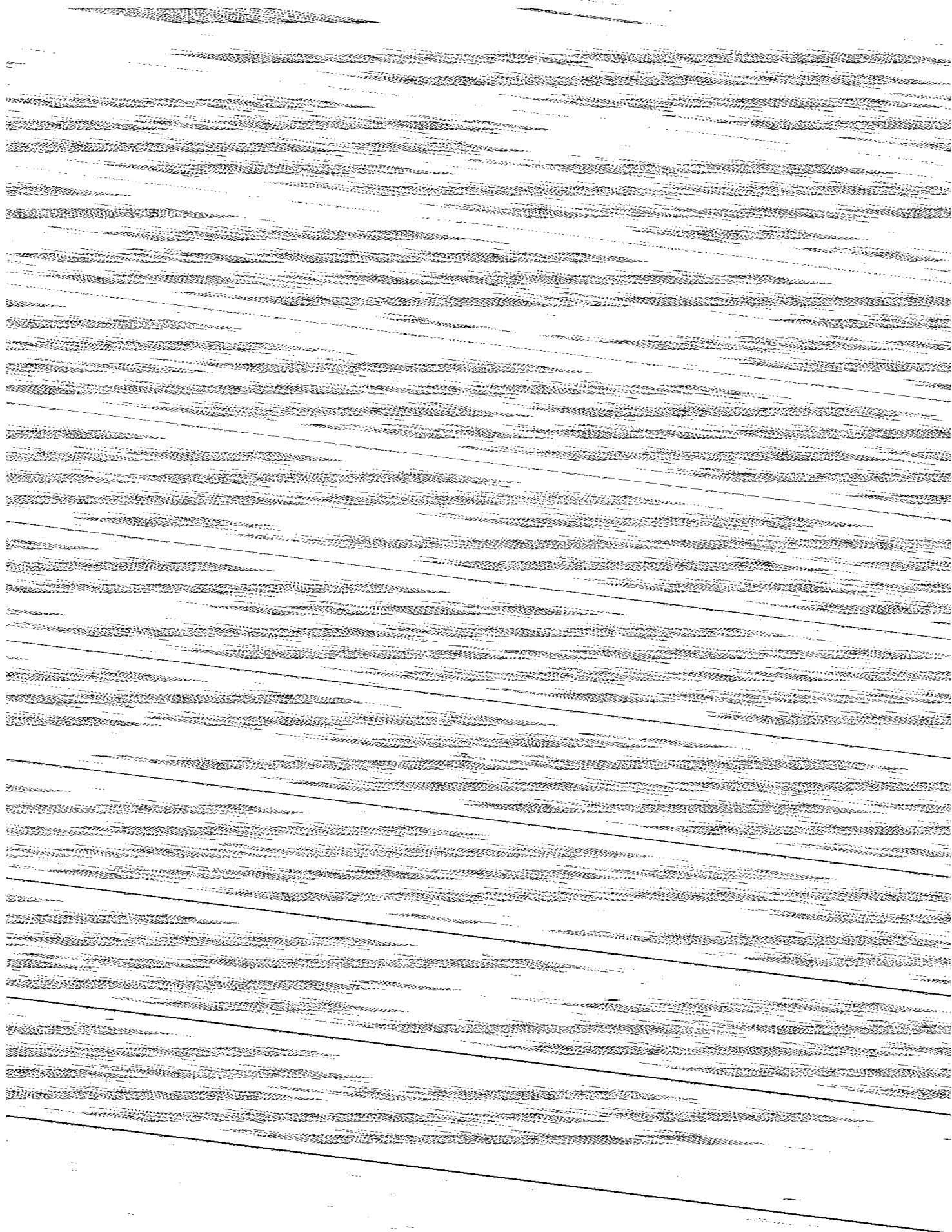
"I swan!" exclaimed Grizzly Gallagher. "I most sartinly do! I must have been mistaken about those sunflowers having anything to do with the hidden gold."

As he spoke, he arose to his feet and stood for a moment outlined against the rising sun. At that moment, three hundred feet below him, standing on the loose slide rock, Traynor raised his head.

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Drenched to the very bone, and shivering in the chill wind, the three of them reached the shelter of the timber a hundred yards from the path of the great slide, and tight to his great breast Grizzly Gallagher hugged the baby, wrapped in its shielding quilts.

"We're all right now," said the old woodsman. "Watch the cliff; she's going to cave."

As he spoke, little particles of rock began to drop from the three-hundred-foot face of rock above them. Then, as though split off by a giant ax, a huge section of the mountain face slid down onto the top of the moving slide.

"My sunflowers!" exclaimed Hattie, with the inconsistency of a woman. "There's only one left."

For, stronger than the rest, one lone sunflower still remained erect, facing the oncoming slide.

"The slide is going to miss the tents after all," said Grizzly Gallagher. "Good thing I insisted on pitching them where I did. And the storm is about over. See, the rain is ceasing, and the clouds are drifting away toward the northeast."

As he spoke, the sun came out from behind the clouds and shone brightly on the huge fresh scar that defaced the side of Sunset Mountain. And as the pressure of the water behind it ceased, the big rock slide suddenly stopped moving.

"I swan!" exclaimed Grizzly Gallagher. "I most sartinly do! That's the worst cloud-burst I ever saw in more'n forty years in the hills."

"Look!" said Hattie suddenly, pointing to where the shadow of the lone sunflower lay like a path across the scattered rocks. "There's a hole in the side of the mountain."

"I swan!" said Grizzly Gallagher. "I most sartinly do!"

"It's the lost mine," said Teddy.

Shoved ahead by the power of the water falling over the cliff, the great slide had moved on until it had disclosed

the mouth of a tunnel which had been hidden for more than sixty years.

"Hold the baby, Hattie," said Grizzly Gallagher, "and wait here while Teddy and I go and take a look."

With the baby in her arms, Hattie slowly clambered after Grizzly Gallagher and Teddy as they made their way over the slide to the mouth of the lost mine. But once there Grizzly Gallagher absolutely forbade her to enter.

"And it's your place to stay with her," he said to Teddy, "for there might be danger of caving ground."

Fifteen, twenty, thirty feet Grizzly Gallagher made his way beneath a roof of rotten rock, then suddenly he stopped and knelt.—For, seen by the thin gray light that filtered in from the tunnel mouth, was a pile of broken quartz richly veined with gold.

"I swan!" exclaimed Grizzly Gallagher as he picked up a piece. "I most sartinly do! It must have been lying here since the cliff caved on the mouth of the tunnel more'n sixty years ago."

"I reckon it's purty rich," he told Teddy and Hattie when he returned to where the sun was shining as though there never had been a storm. "But we'll find out for sure after things dry out a little more."

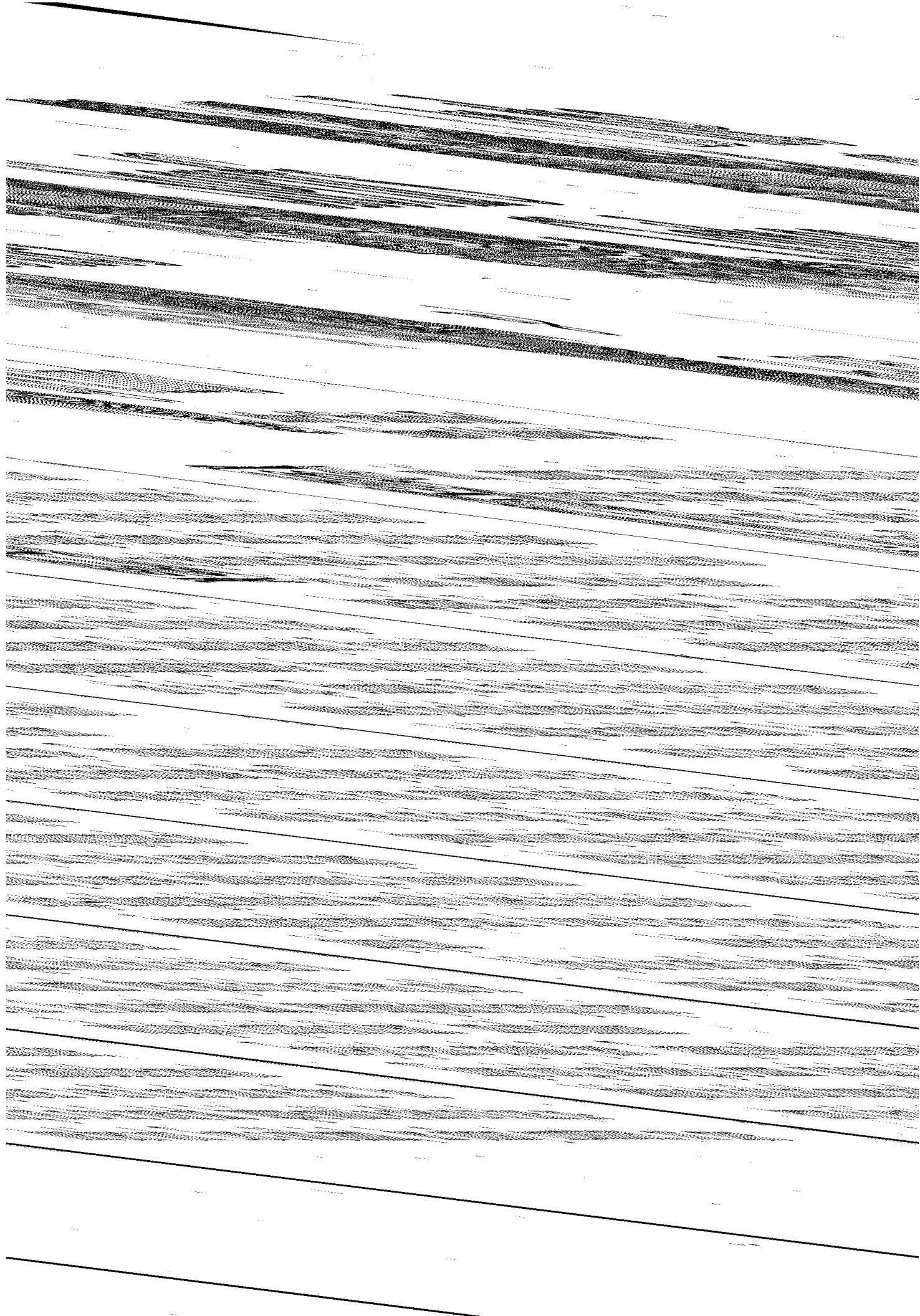
Then gently Grizzly Gallagher opened the baby's tiny fingers and closed them over the piece of glittering quartz.

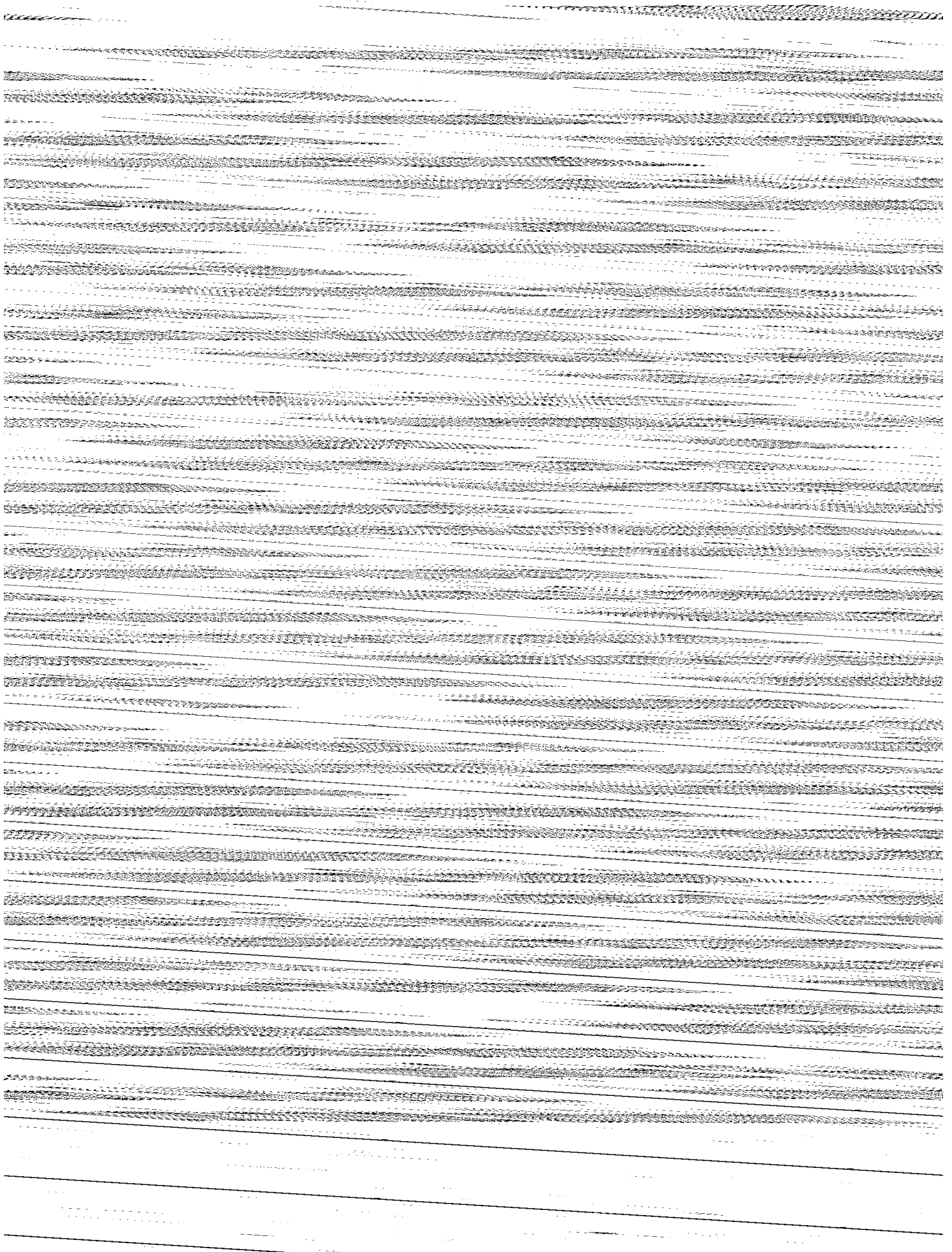
"How's that for a nugget, old timer?" he asked.

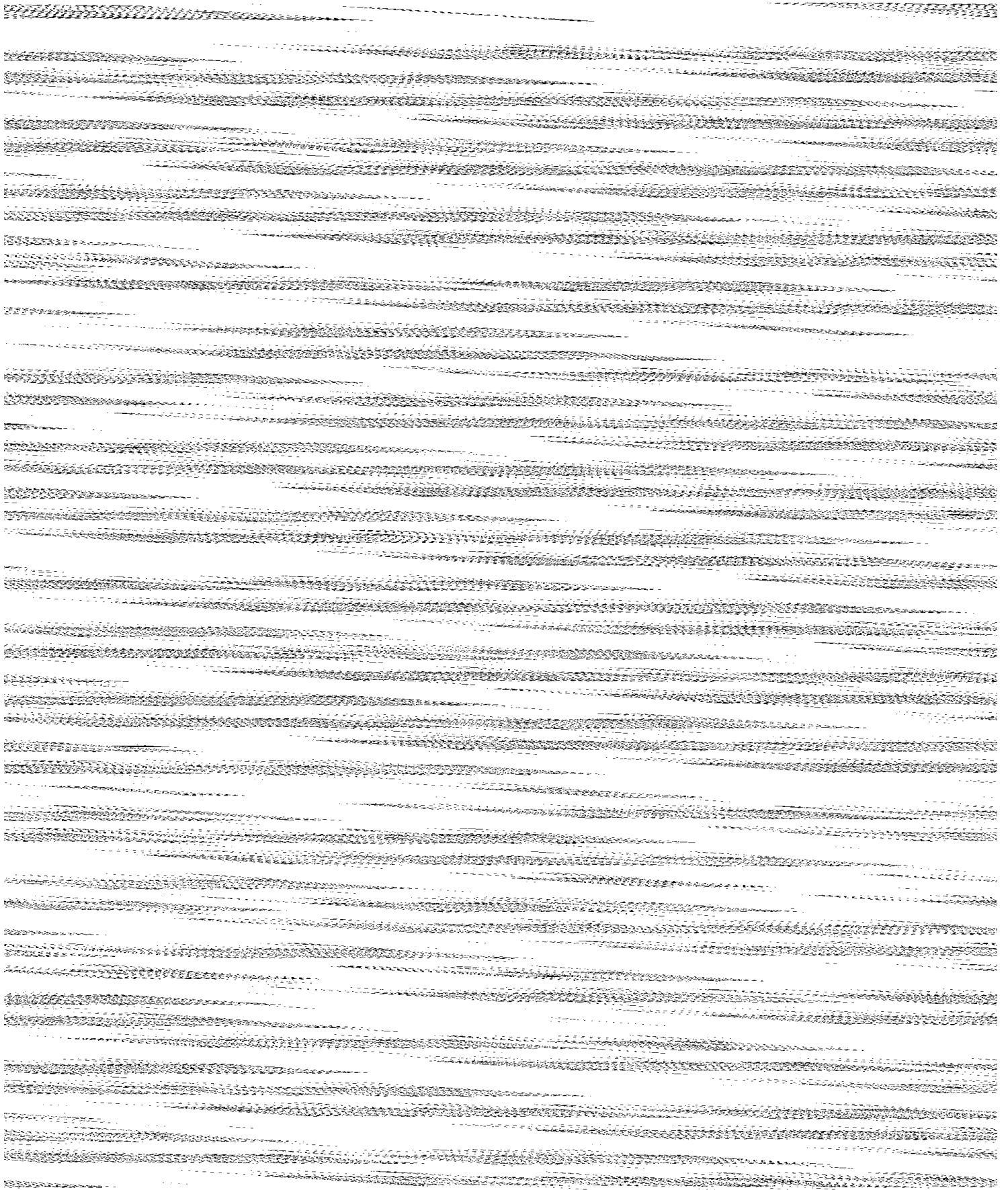
But the baby cared nothing about gold. He was much more interested in the shadow of the big sunflower that, like the finger of fate, still pointed out the lost mine, and, beneath the touch of the breeze moved to and fro, to and fro.

Slowly the baby's fingers unclasped, and the golden quartz fell clattering to the rocks and rolled into a deep hole. Wide the blue baby eyes stared at the weaving shadow of the sunflower; then the corners of his lips crinkled in a smile.

"Goo," said the baby, "goo."







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sat beside the bed. Ike Cross, the trapper, had left plenty of water inside the cabin, but none but an exceptionally strong man could have gone through the ordeal of attending to the fire and waiting on himself while suffering from pneumonia.

"Guess you're right about the fresh air," the sick man agreed, drawing into his lungs the cool breeze that came through the window. "I thought of that, too. But I thought mostly about not eating anything. I heard they don't feed pneumonia patients, but give 'em plenty of water. Ike left three buckets of water, one alongside the bed here. I think I'm getting better. I don't seem to have the fever I did this morning."

"Maybe ye passed the crisis," Steve suggested.

"Maybe. I hope so."

"Ye hadn't better talk no more," Steve urged. "Be quiet an' try t' sleep. I see there's a coupla blankets in the corner there. I'll turn in, if ye don't mind."

"Go ahead. That's where Ike Cross slept, after I came here sick."

"Call me, if ye need anything—an' keep bundled up in yer blankets. We'll leave that window open. It'll do ye good, an' I'll tend the fire. Ye go to sleep."

"Thanks."

Thus they spent the night. In the morning the sick man was much improved. He had slept well in a room filled with fresh air. He had scarcely any fever, but he was very weak. Steve filled the water buckets with fresh water from a spring outside, and he did what he could to make the patient comfortable. Steve ate a hearty breakfast and accepted another cigar offered by the stranger. He cleaned his dishes and made the cabin tidy. He fed the dog.

"Stranger," Steve said. "I got to be movin'."

"All right. Thanks for what you've done for me."

"That's all right. It was a good thing fer both of us, maybe. I needed grub an' a place t' sleep, an' ye needed a little tendin' to." Steve paused and then asked: "Ye're an officer, ain't ye, stranger?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. I seen yer star last night, when ye reached in yer coat pocket fer that cigar, but I didn't say nuthin'. What're ye doin' in the Nippicutt Woods, stranger?"

"Hunting for Steve Kilgore."

The men continued to gaze at one another, and their faces were emotionless, blank of any expression that would give a hint of what was going on inside.

"D'ye know who I be, stranger?" Steve asked.

"You're Steve Kilgore," the sheriff replied calmly.

Steve shifted uneasily. He studied the sheriff's clothing, scattered about the room, and then his eyes went back to the man's face.

"Ye're right about that," Steve admitted. "I'm Steve Kilgore. I been hunted so long an' chased around, that I don't deny it no more. I don't try an' cover it up, as ev'rybody's seen me or heard about me, and most folks know me on sight. Them that ain't seen me know what I look like, same's ye did."

"I knew you the minute you stepped in the door."

"Sure ye did, an' I knowed it. Well, why didn't ye take a shot at me when I was sleepin' there in the corner?"

"I didn't want to."

"Still ye're huntin' me, an' there's a reward."

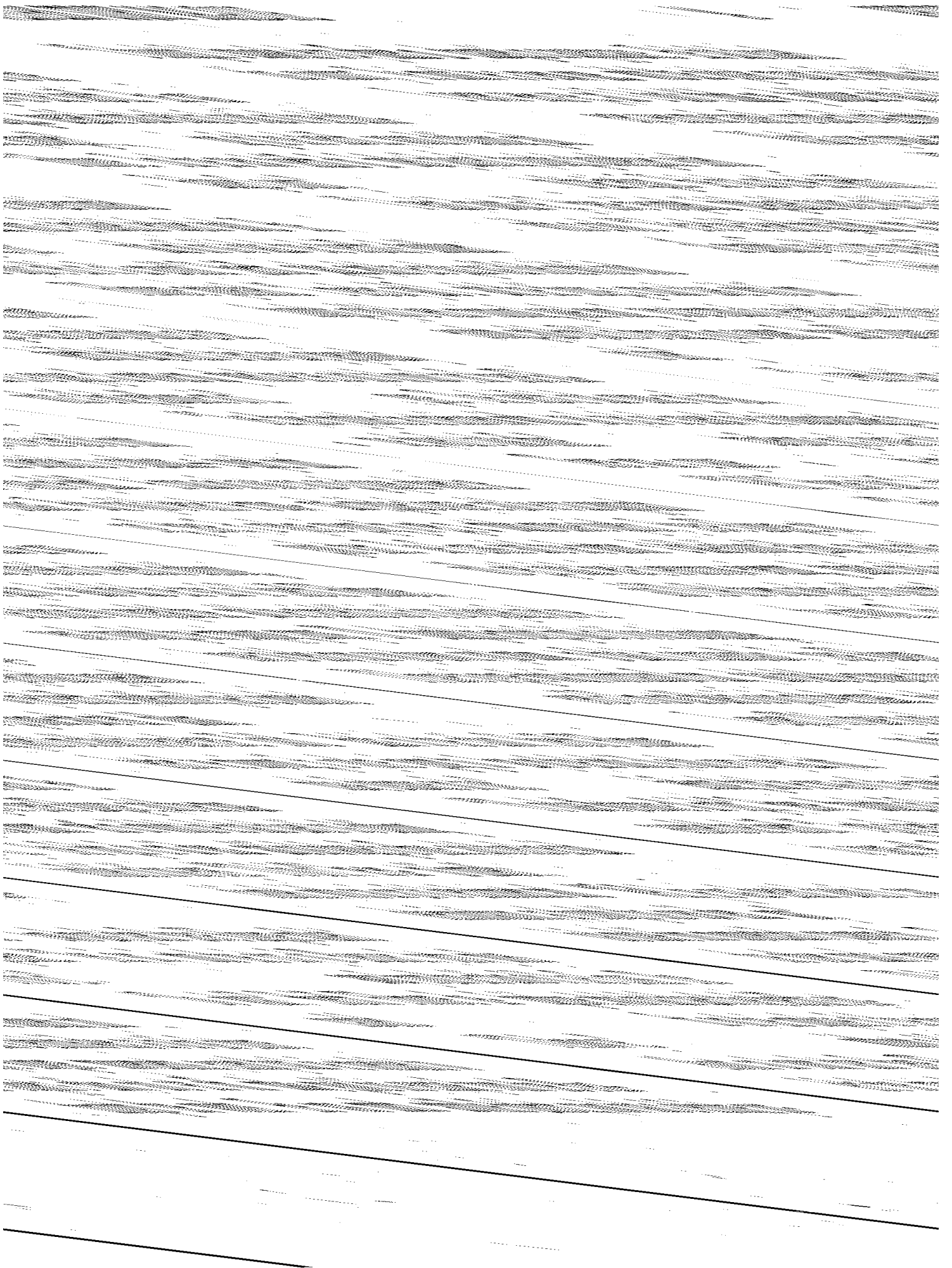
"I'll get you some other way, when I get on my feet."

Steve nodded. He looked outside. The snow had set in.

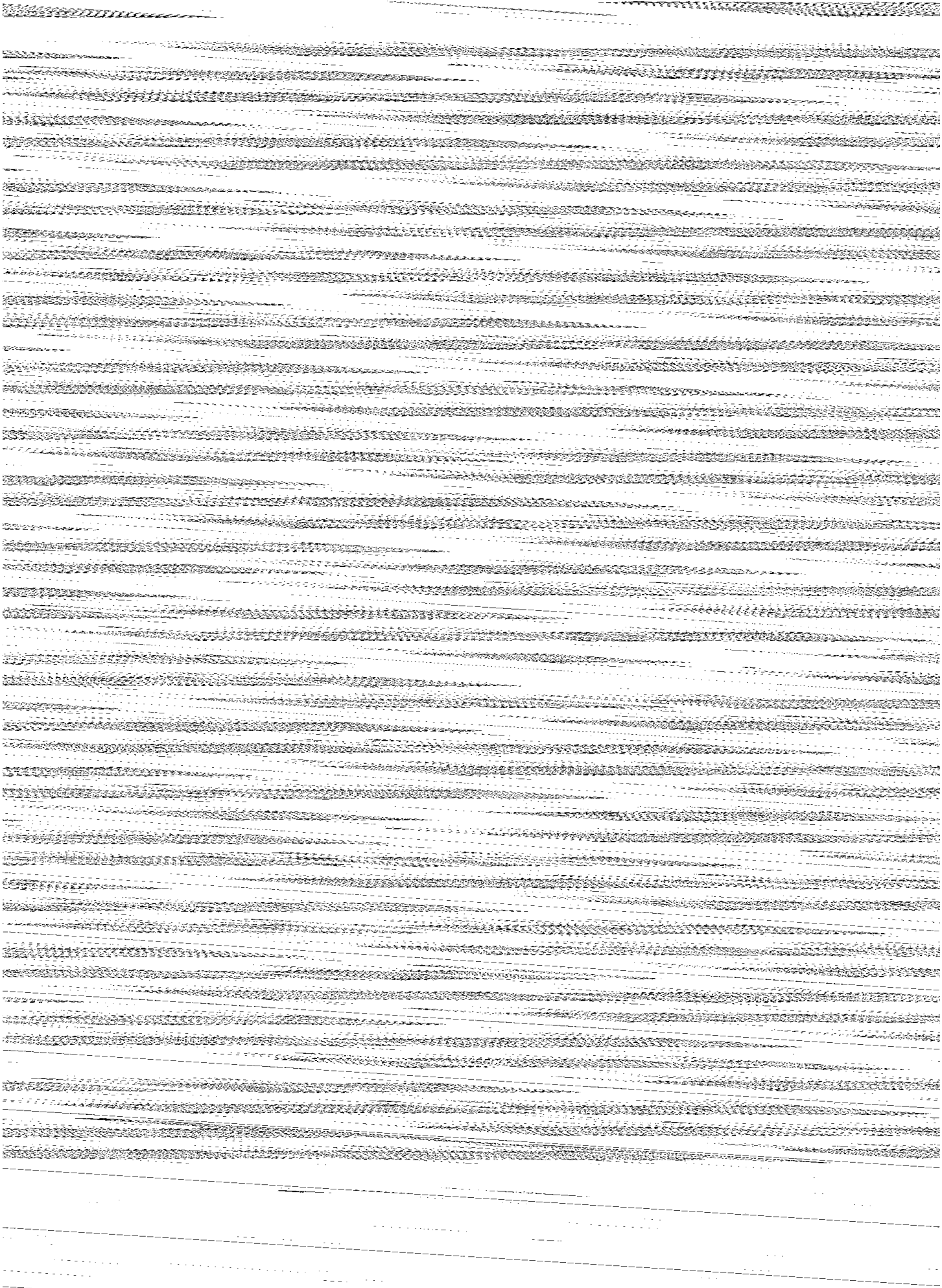
"Keep that window open," he said, "even if it does snow in. Fresh air'll do ye good."

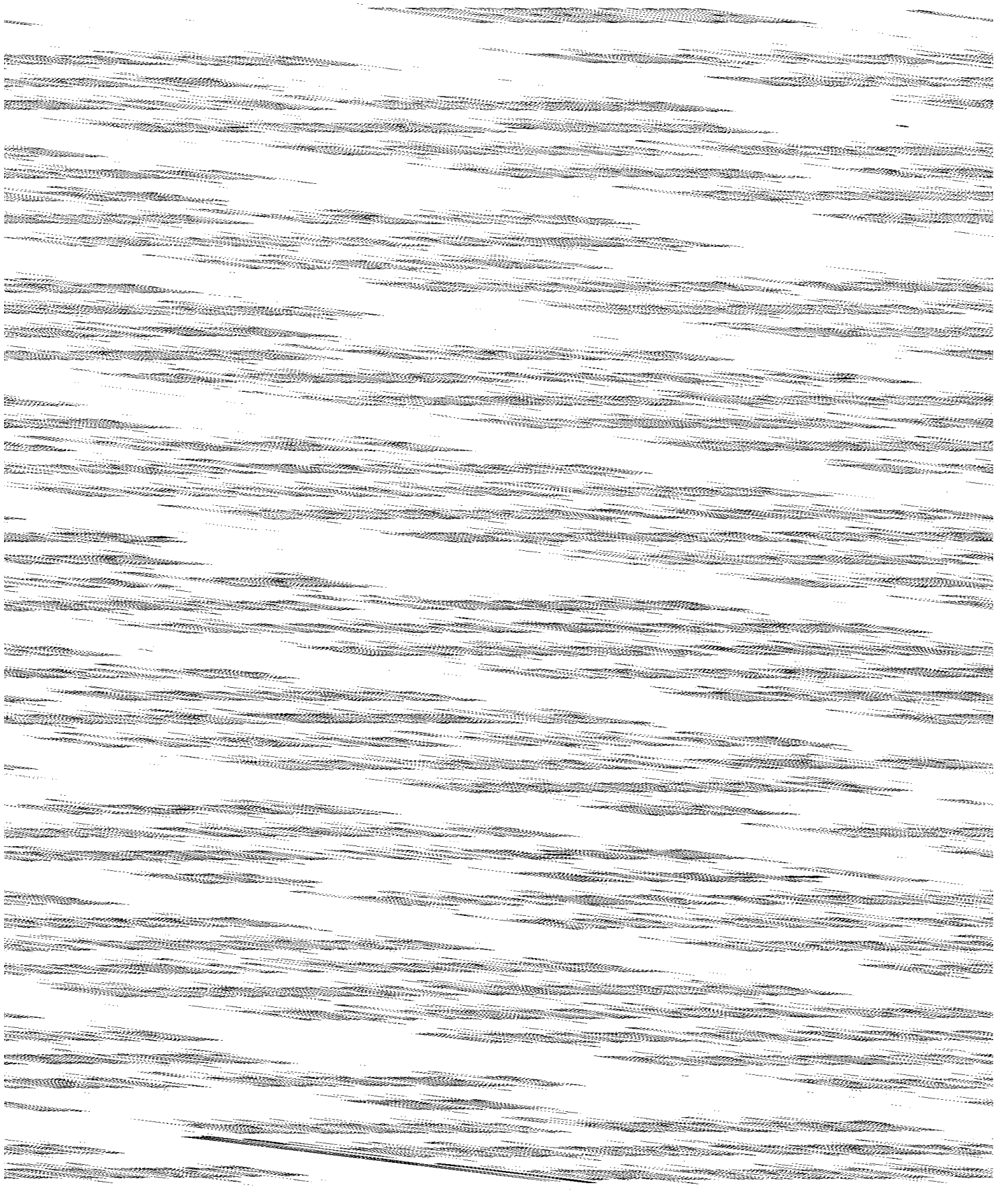
"Thanks."

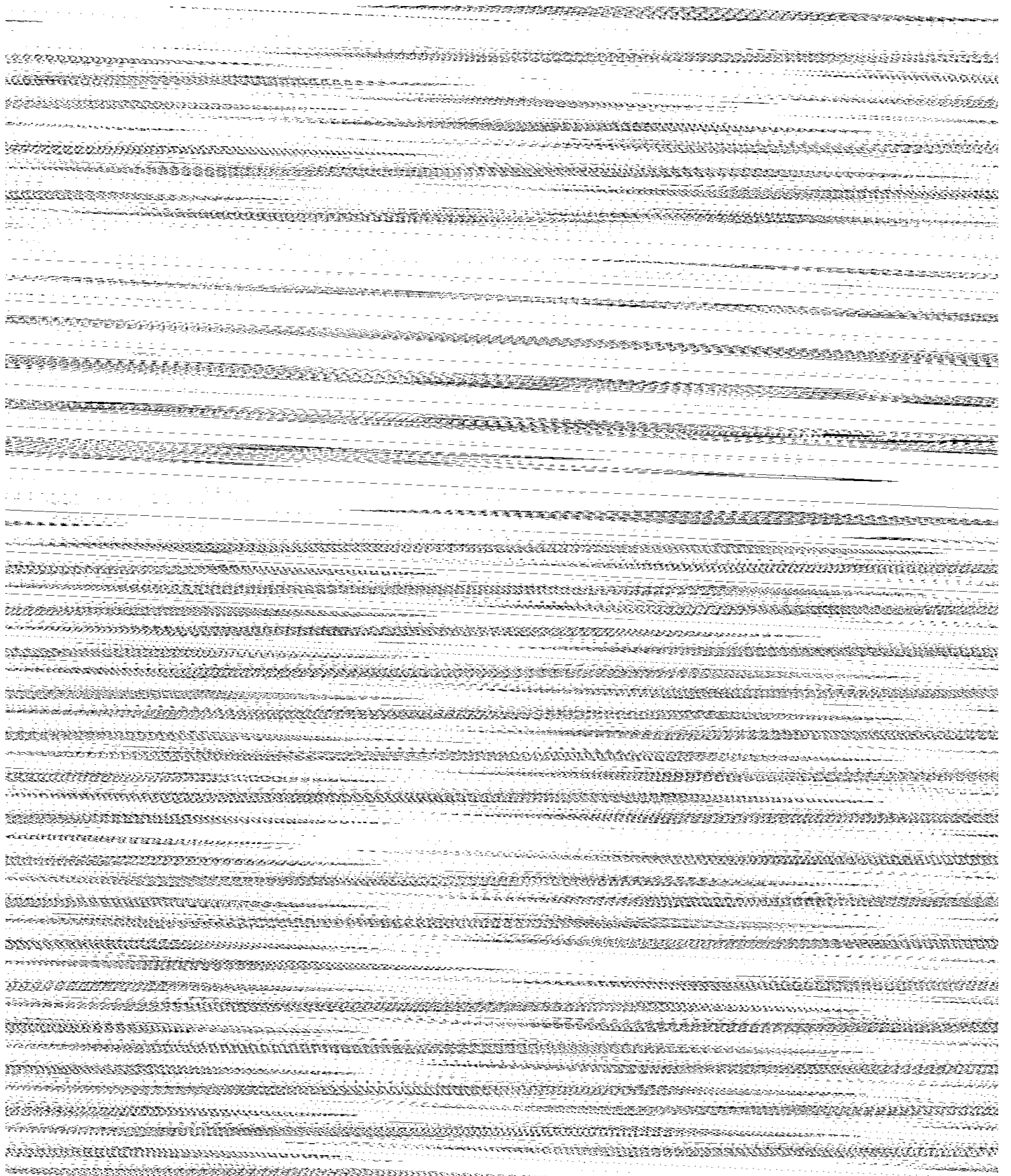
Steve studied him again and said:

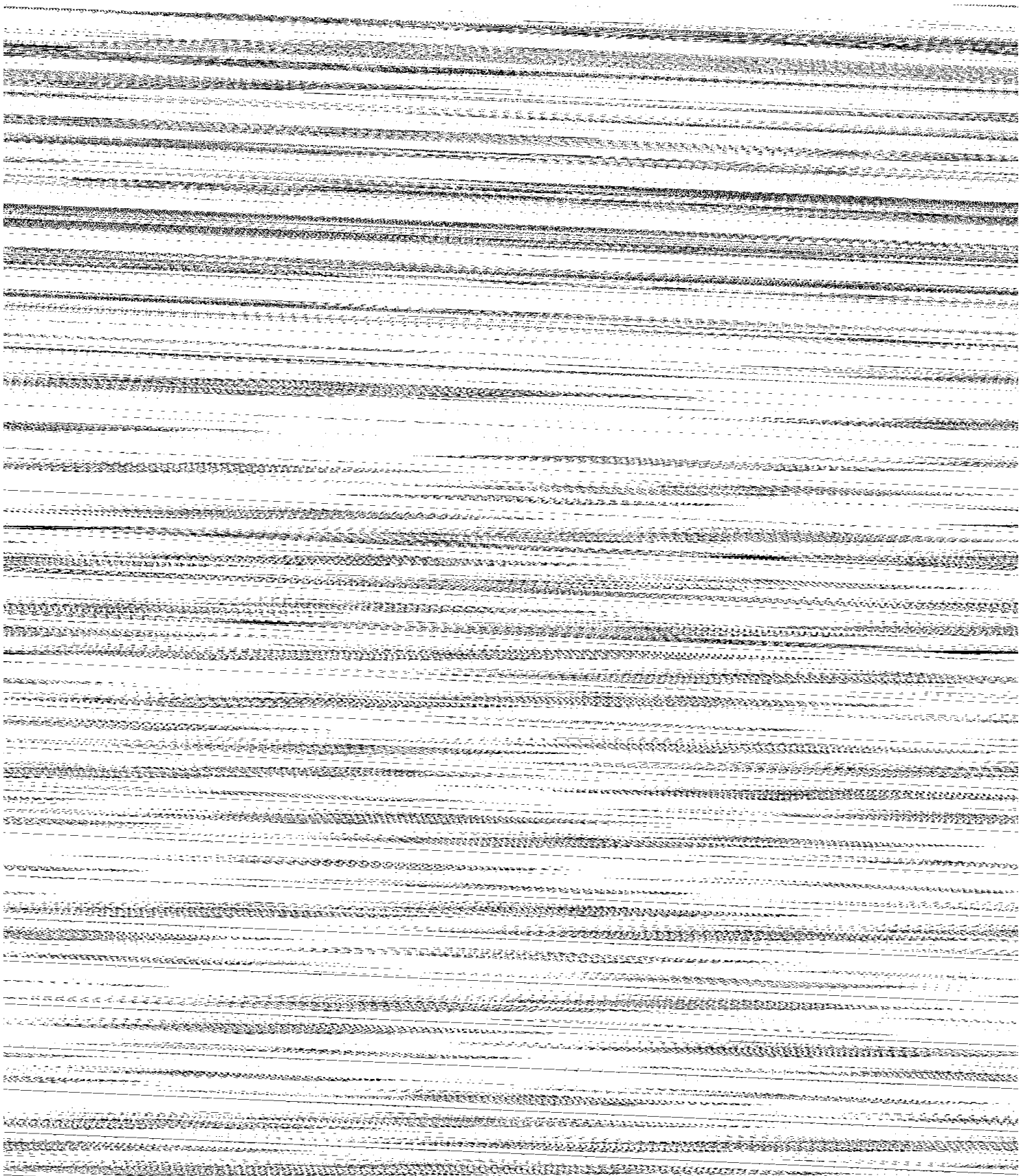


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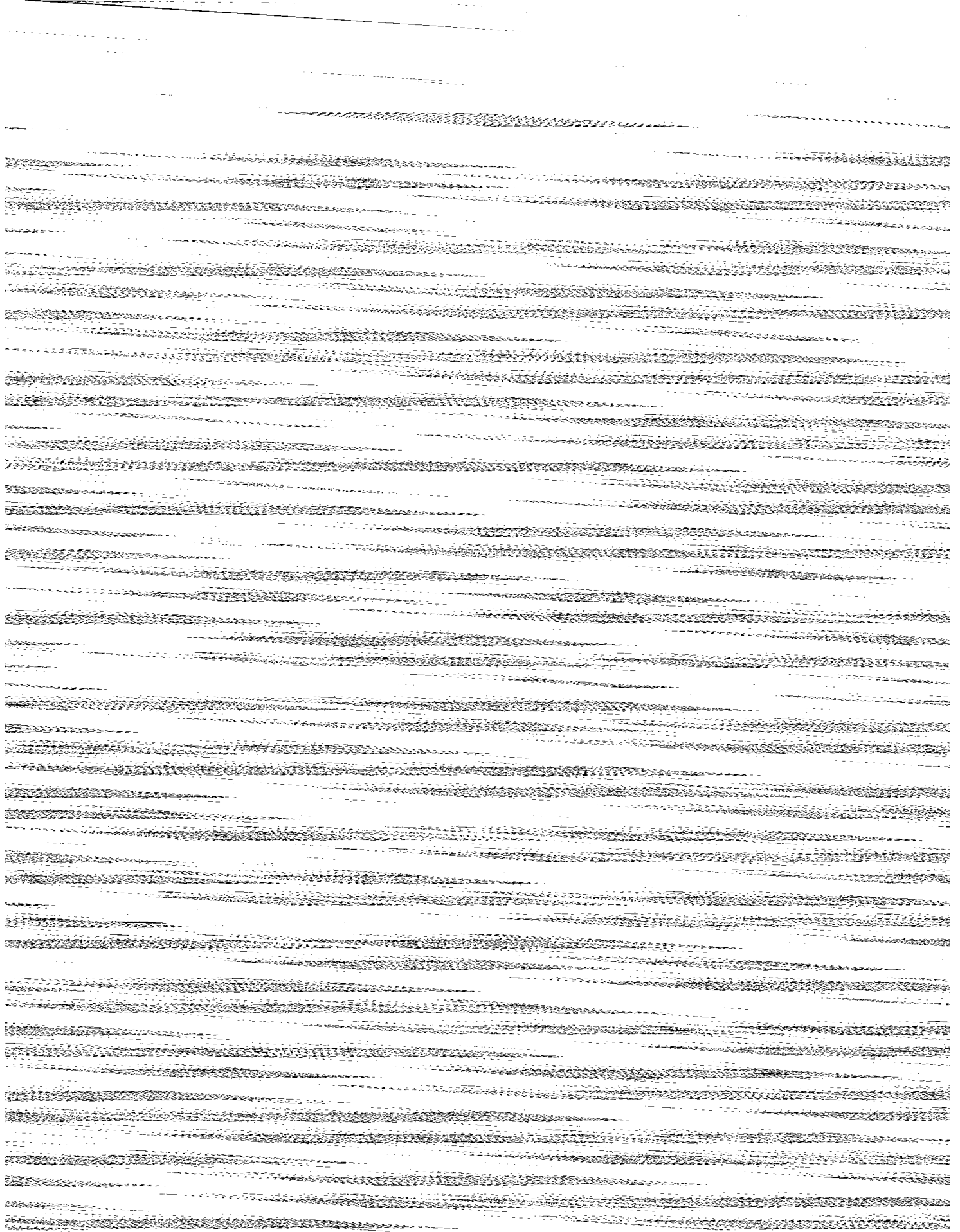


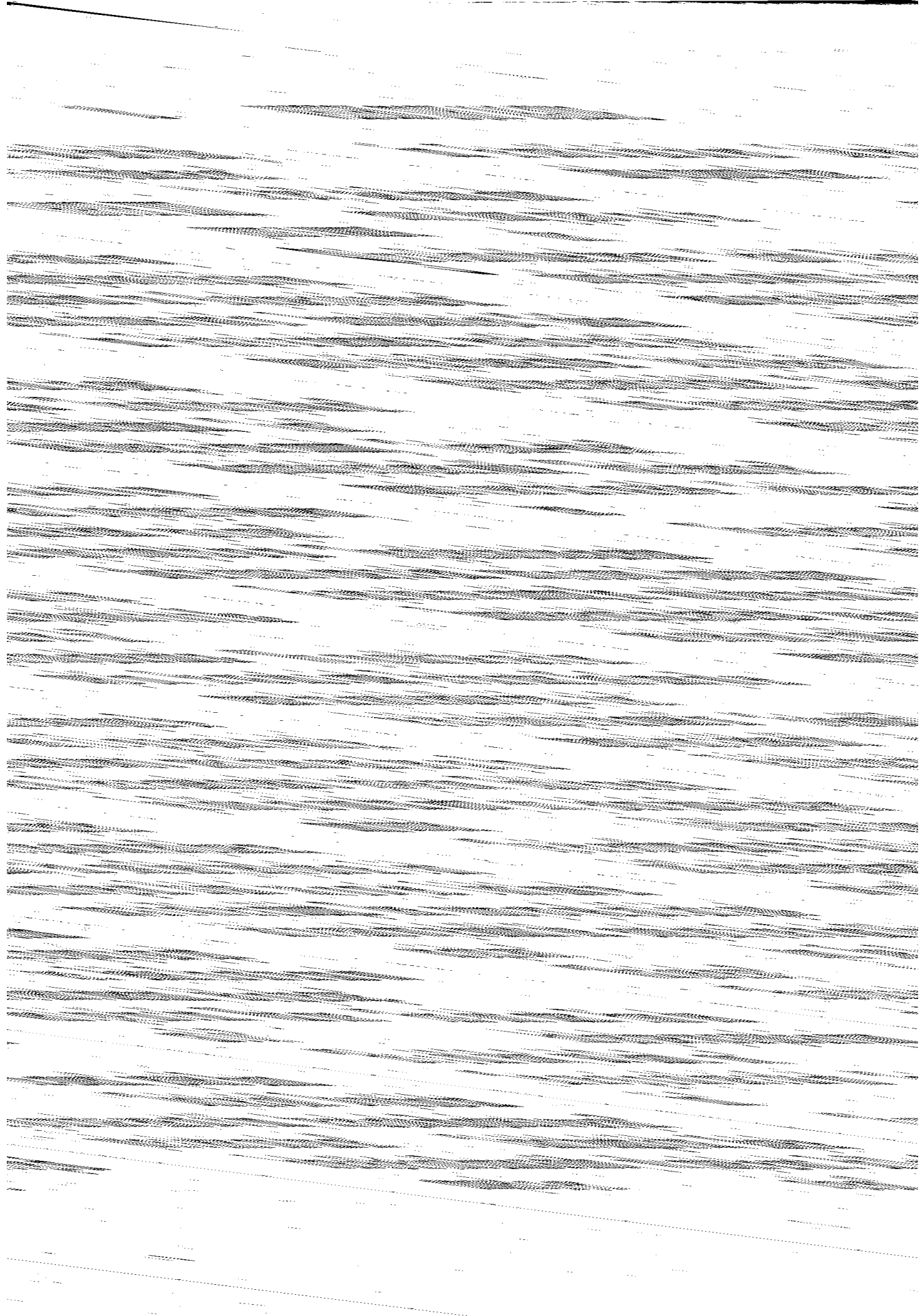




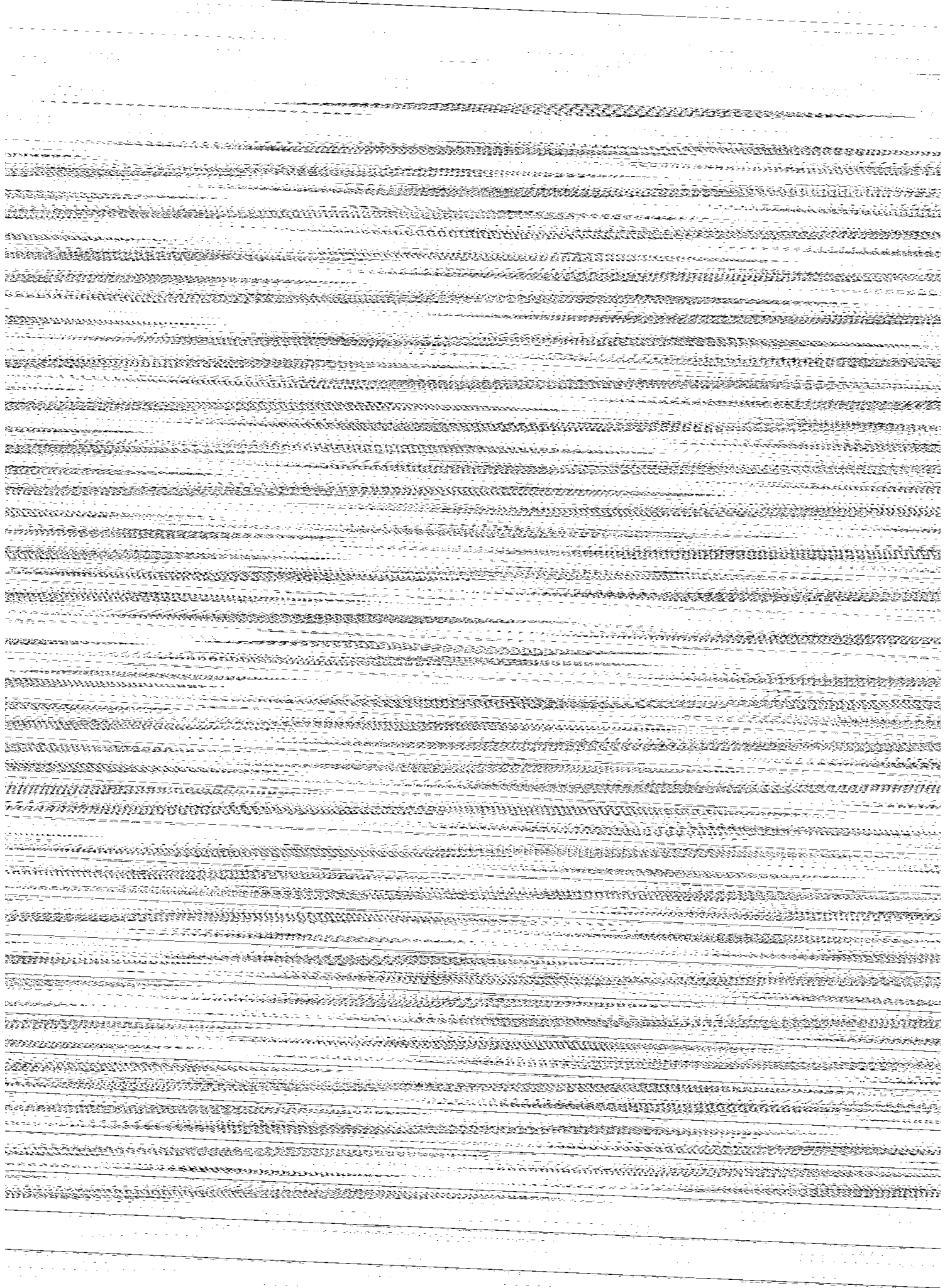


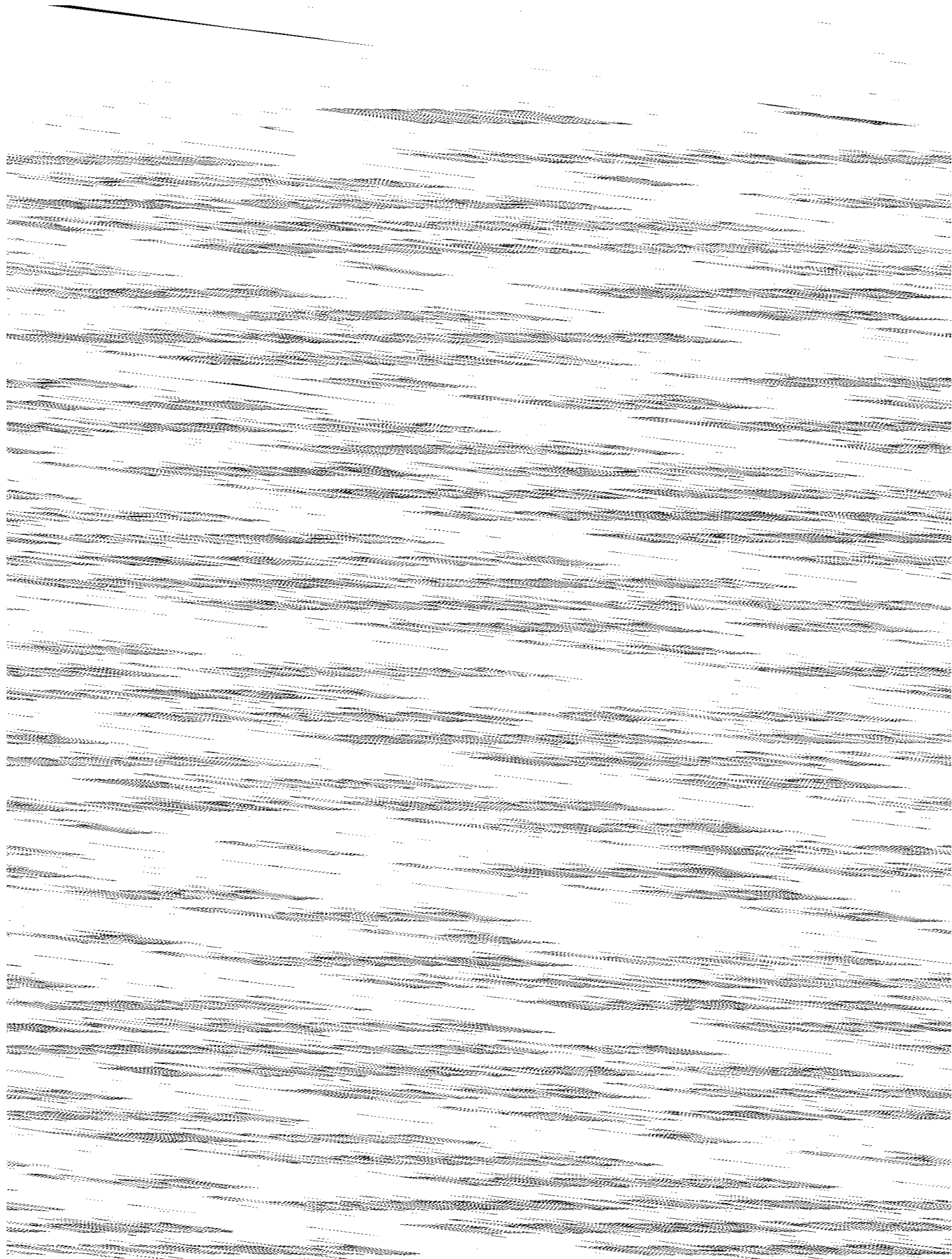
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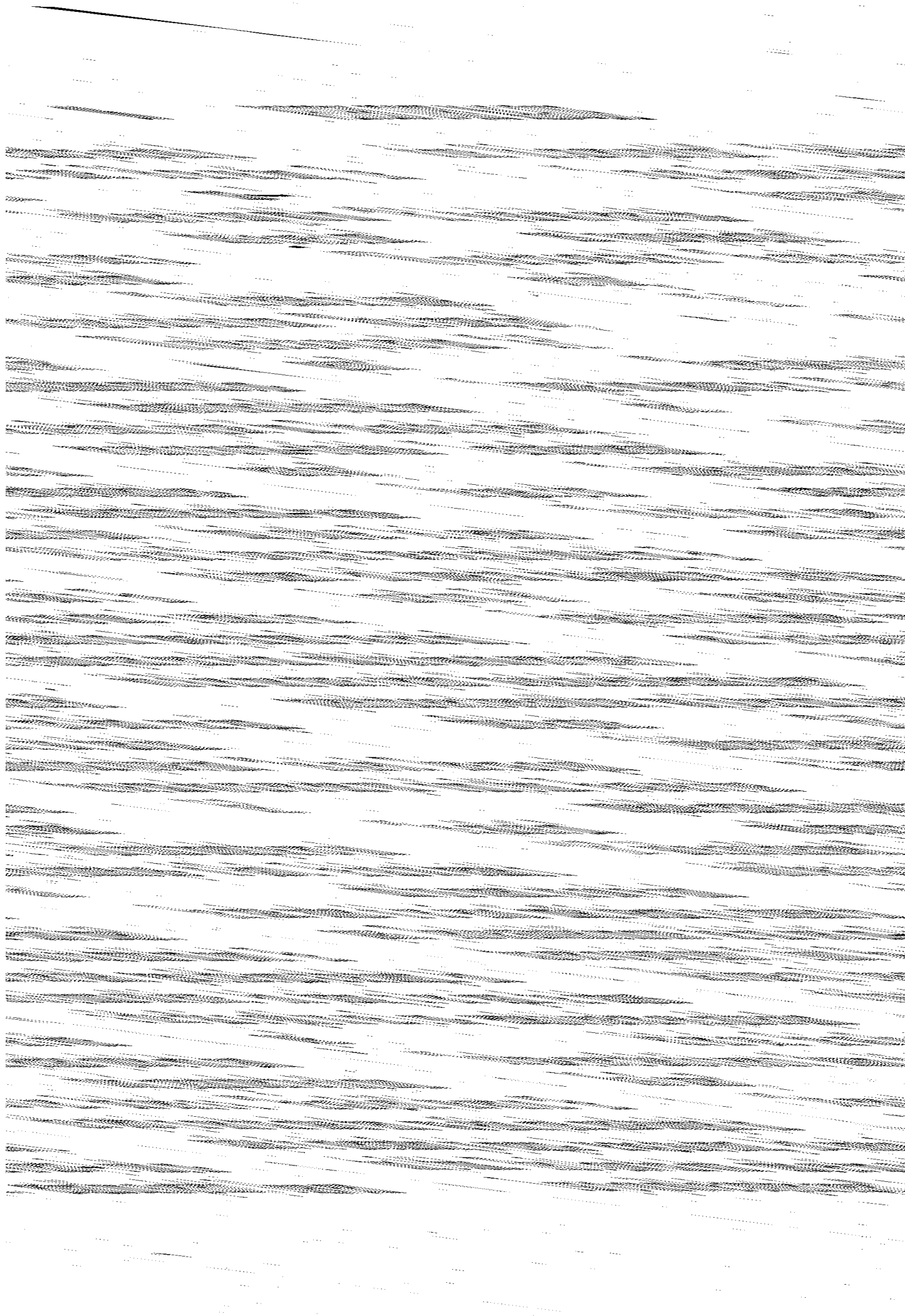


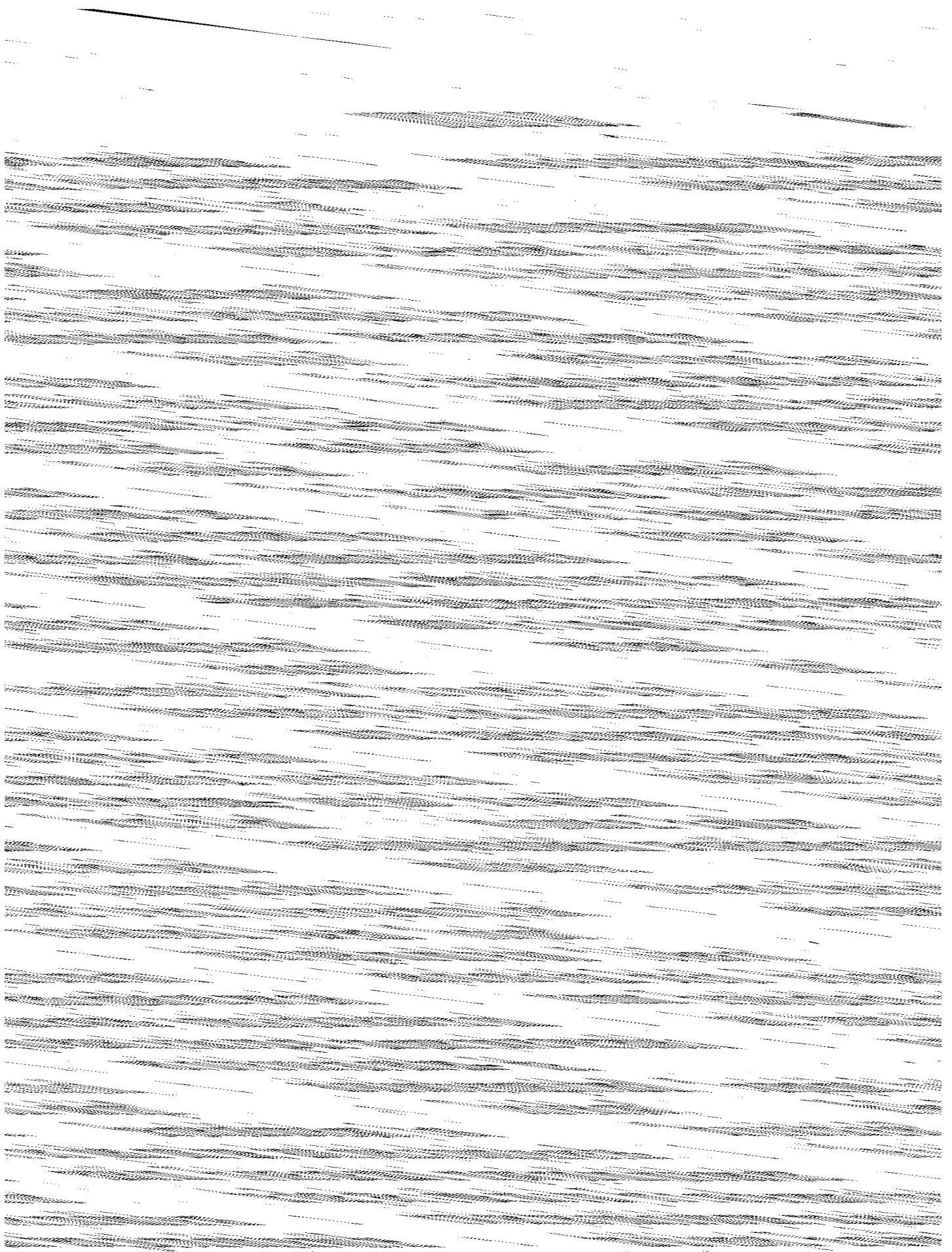


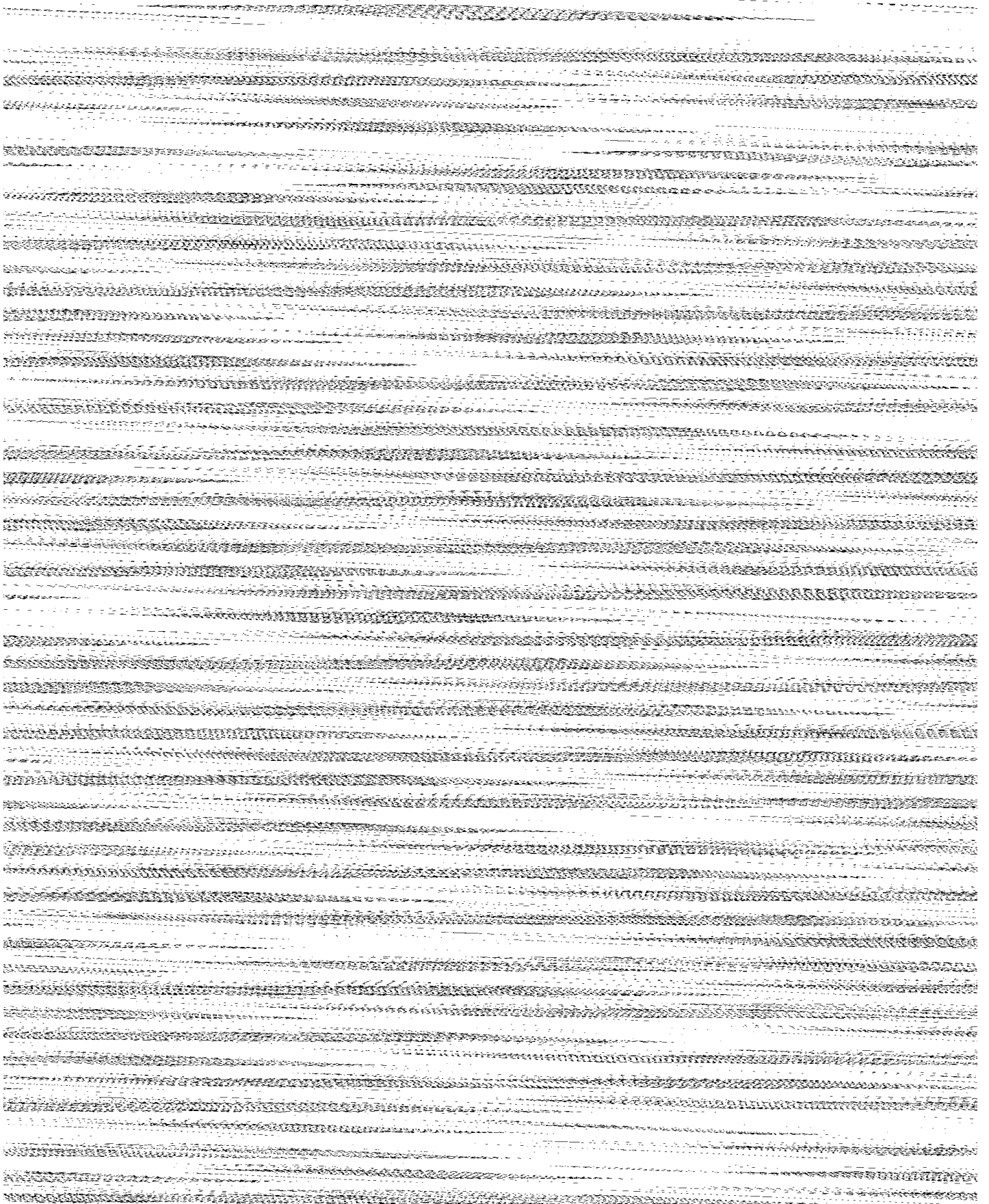
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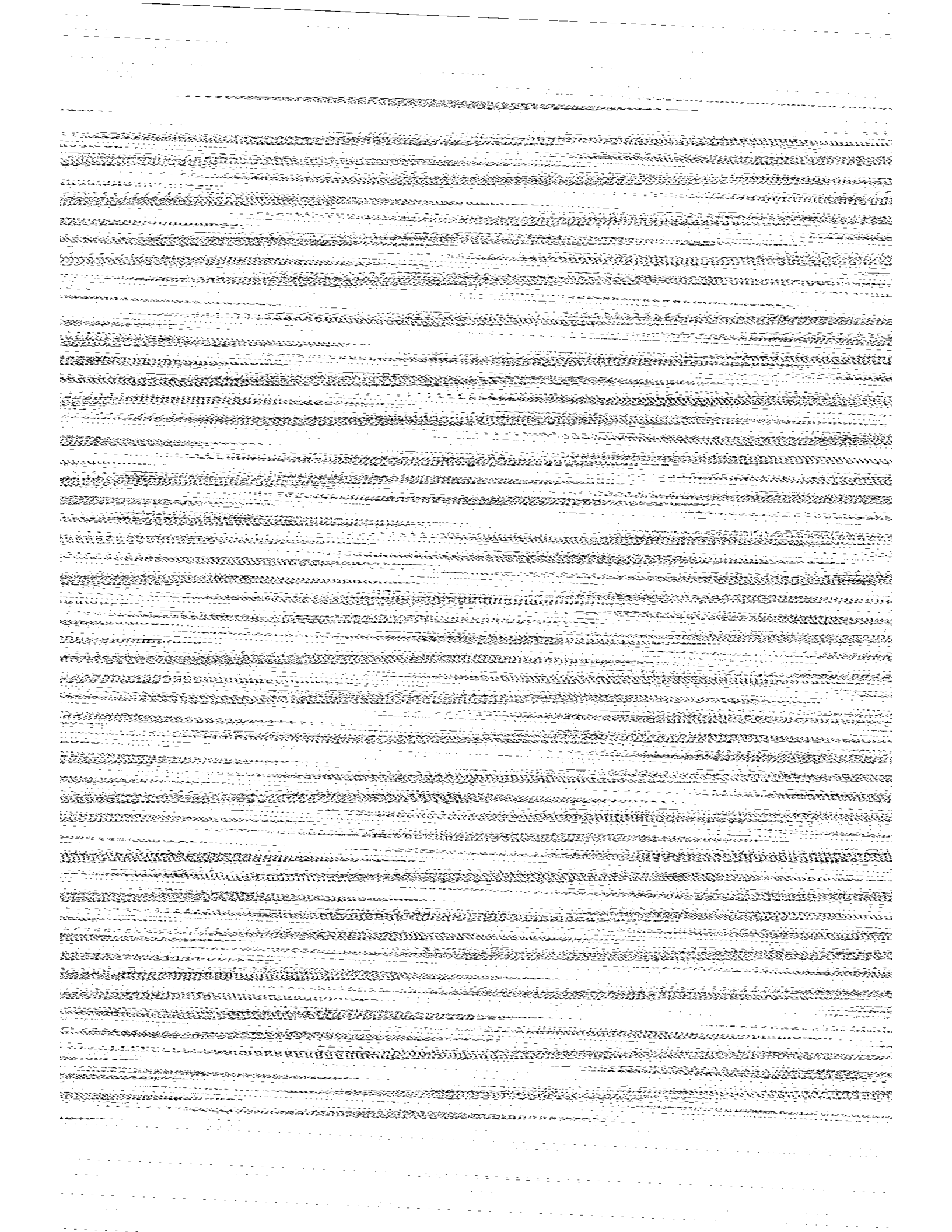


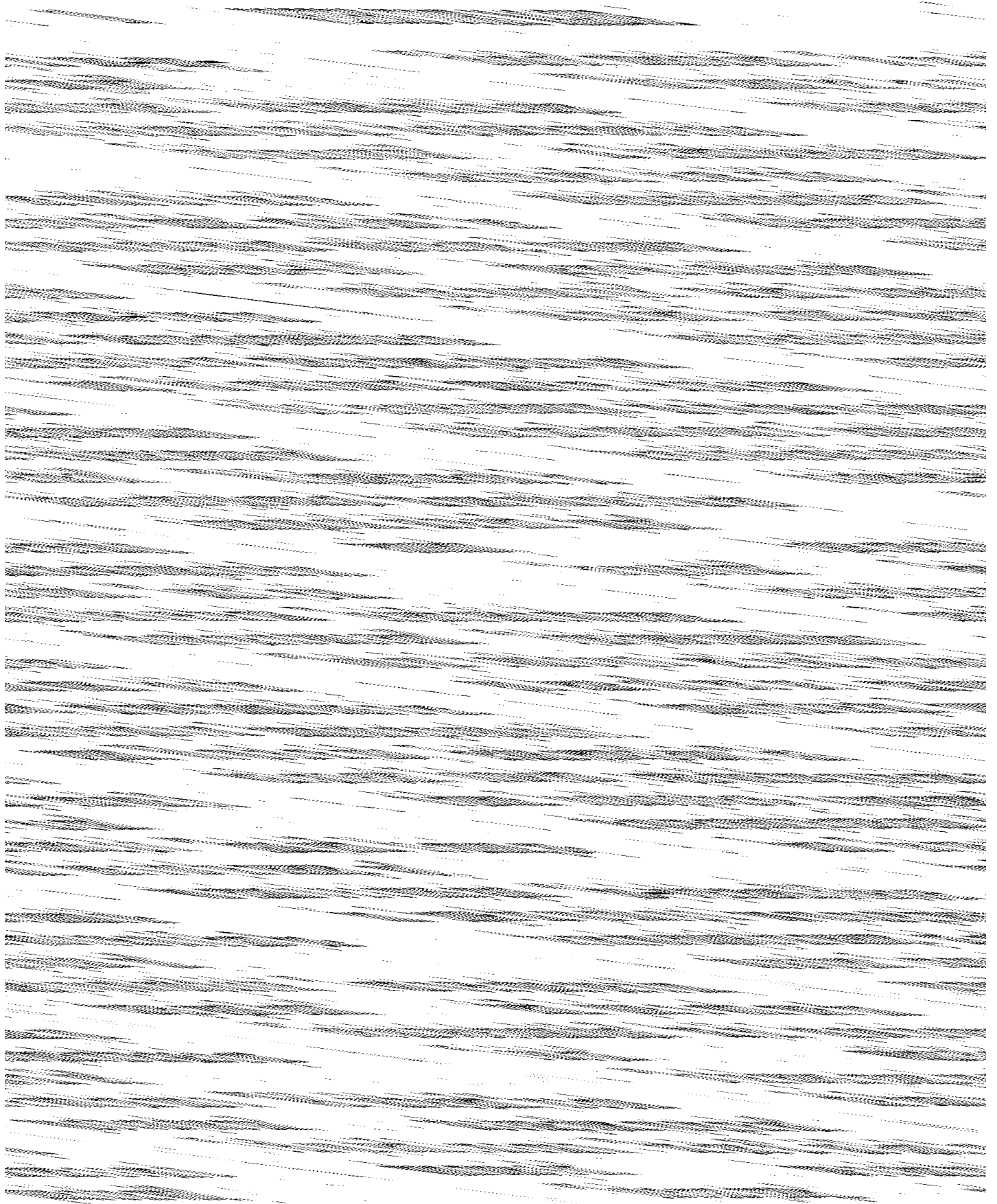












"There is, son, there is! The quitters and the yaller skunks in the world is the ones that are always hollerin' about the raw deals they're gettin'. But the men are the ones that stand up and admit that they get what's comin' to 'em. Now, young feller, I'd give a good deal to know who you might be!"

"You'd give a good deal to see me behind bars, old-timer, but you'll never have that privilege. Good night."

He reached the door, unlocked it, and bowed himself out.

The sheriff, for his part, did not make the slightest attempt to pursue. He sat still, rigid, like one in a trance, seeing strange things beyond this world.

"He talked slick and pretty," said the sheriff. "He talked smooth and easy. He didn't have no trouble with his words!"

He closed his eyes and contracted his brows. "He talked," said the sheriff in a whisper to himself, "mighty like somebody that I've heard talk before. Who might that of been? Who might that of been?"

"Oh," groaned the sheriff, rising and pacing the floor back and forth, "what a blind fool I am. Why can't I see? I know his voice easy and plain as I know my own!"

Up and down that floor he paced, and up and down it, through a long hour.

He heard the voice of his wife, but he paced on.

"Are you comin' upstairs to bed this here minute?"

Who could think with such a wail in one's ears? The sheriff rushed to the door and cast it open in a frenzy of rage.

"Darn it," he shouted. "Leave a man be! You'd hang an innocent man for the sake of five minutes of sleep. Lemme be! Lemme be!"

There began a jangling torrent of words in answer, but the sheriff strode back into the room, breathing hard,

triumphant. About once a month he raised his voice in that house, and about once a month he was heard. Those days were set apart from all the rest—strenuous but joyful.

And now, in the midst of his anger, the memory for which he had been struggling came sweetly and suddenly back upon him. There was another man in the town who spoke good English, English as fine as that of Jack Rutledge, even. And this man was of the size of him who wore the mask. It was, in fact, none other than that mysterious new hired man on the Carney place, he who had dared to cross the sheriff's potent self not long before!

He, then, was the real robber of the stage!

The sheriff stretched out his long arms and smote his hands together. Not the joy of Glanvil hurrying down the mountain was greater than the joy of the sheriff on the man trail. Much was still to be learned, and much was still to be kept secret. But the certainty of victory was big in the sheriff's heart!

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE GUN FIGHT.

THE sun was halfway up the sky of the next morning when Jack Rutledge stood before the lady of his love at the end of his last appeal.

"What I've come to ask you, Louise," he said, "is whether or not I can hope for anything. Not because of what I said in the last interview we had together, but because of everything that went before."

"It's everything that went before that makes this last talk so bad," she answered coldly. "Because it looks, Jack, as though you could keep on for many years playing the part of the virtuous man, and not being one. And, in fact, I'm afraid of you. I thought you were a simple person—like me. But I've found that you are not. I've found that

you are very far from simple! There's malice and hate under that bluff exterior of yours!"

"Is that all?" said he.

"I've wanted to speak calmly and quietly," said the girl. "But I can't. I'm sorry—but I can't. Oh, Jack, when you rushed in between me and the man I loved, I thought you came like a selfless hero. Not like this thing that I find you are!"

"You will never forgive me?" he asked.

"Never!"

"If there were ever any love for me in your heart——"

"Oh, there was never a great deal. But I was sorry for you and I thought——"

"Well," he said sadly, "after all, he was right. He was always right!"

"Who was right?"

"Glanvil."

"You promised me that I should never hear that name again!"

"Did I promise that?" he asked her without heat. "Why, my dear, I might as well have promised that you would not hear the wind or the rain. However, that was what he said—that you only pitied me. First it made me rage; then it made me sad; and I began to guess that he might have seen the truth more clearly than I!"

"I don't understand all of this. When could you have talked to Winsor Glanvil about such a thing?"

"My dear, that is what I am about to explain. This precious fellow of yours—this noble heart—this life saver—this John Glenn——"

"I shall not stay to hear you talk any longer," she exclaimed with dignity. "I have not come to listen to scandal-mongering!"

"That becomes you," said he dispassionately. "I like to see you stand so stiff and so straight!"

She could only wonder at him. He stood before her with a lean, haggard

face, his eyes pouched beneath with purple, his head sunk between his shoulders. He had aged; he had grown feeble, and his big hands hung loosely at his sides.

"If my love for you has died," said the girl, "it is not hard to see that yours went out at the same time!"

He shook his head, watching her with a sick smile. "My love for you will last till I am dead," he answered her. "But just now, I'm sick of living. I'm ready to die. And I think that I shall die before the day is ended—unless John Glenn shoots slower and less straight than I think he does. However, I simply see what a hopeless mess I am in. There is no use in struggling. I'm beaten. I'm down and smashed. Well—there's an end of that! I don't whine! I thought, three days ago, that I was just around the corner from heaven, and then Glenn came. I suppose you and he will probably be married, after I'm gone?"

She flushed and set her teeth. "Married?" said she. "With my serving man? How else will you be able to insult me, Jack, before you have decided to leave me?"

"Don't you see?" he explained in his heavy, dull voice. "It isn't Glenn. That's not the name!"

"What do you mean?"

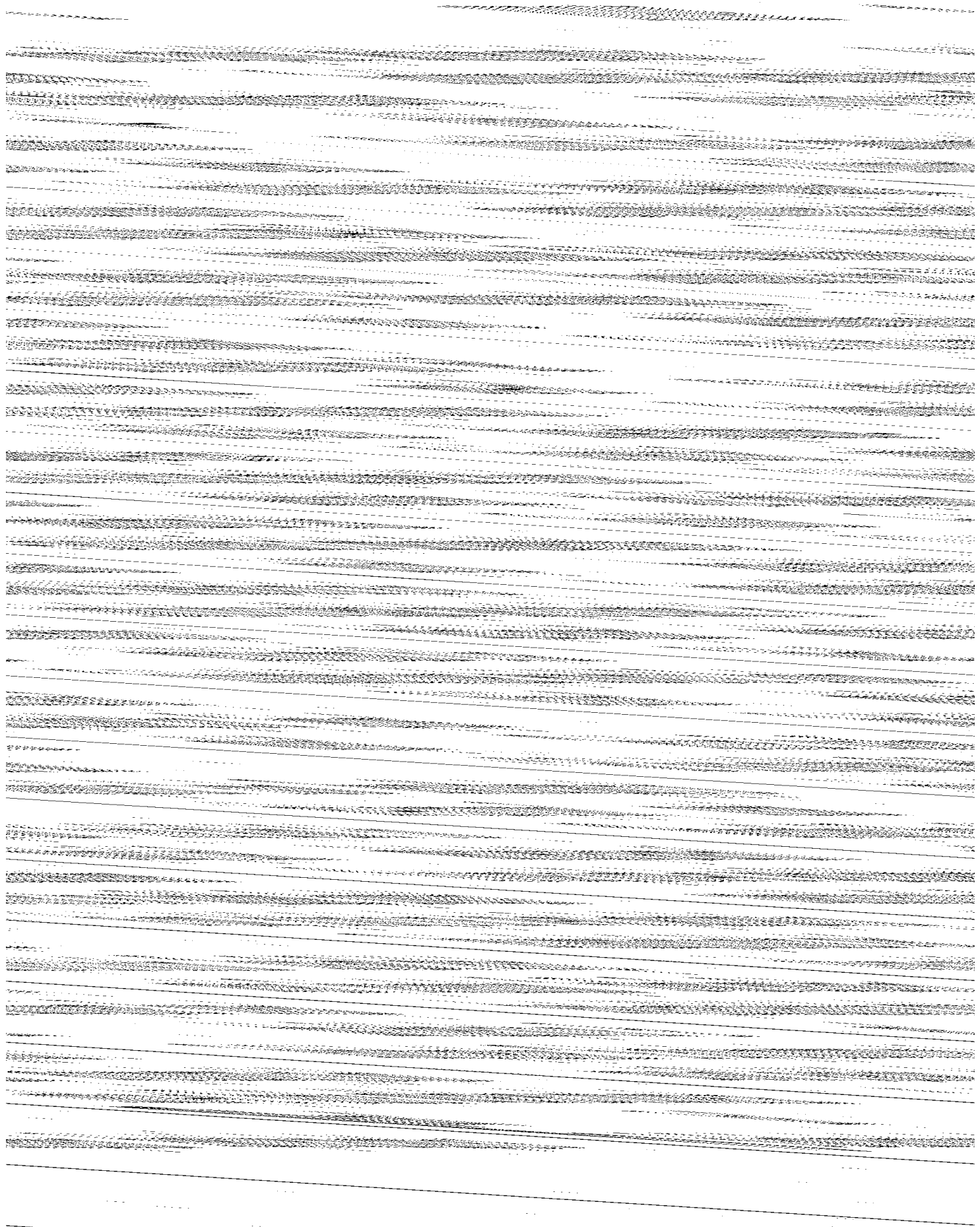
"All the rot about the saving of my life—surely you must have guessed that there was something wrong in that. Or did you really think that I could be such an ungrateful cur? No, no, Louise, it's not Glenn. That's not the name, but one very like it."

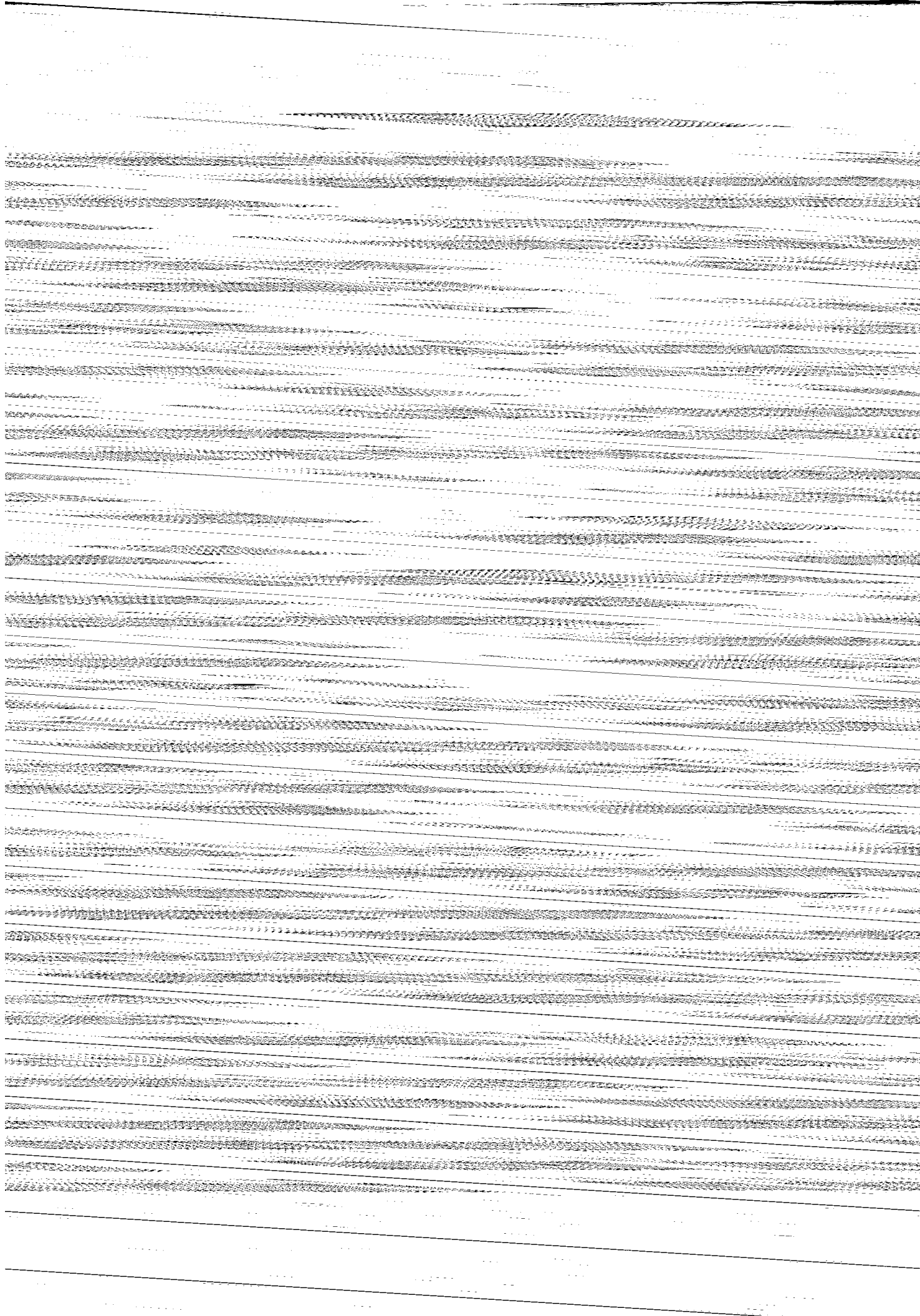
"What do you mean, Jack?" she asked him, panting with something between horror and hope and fear.

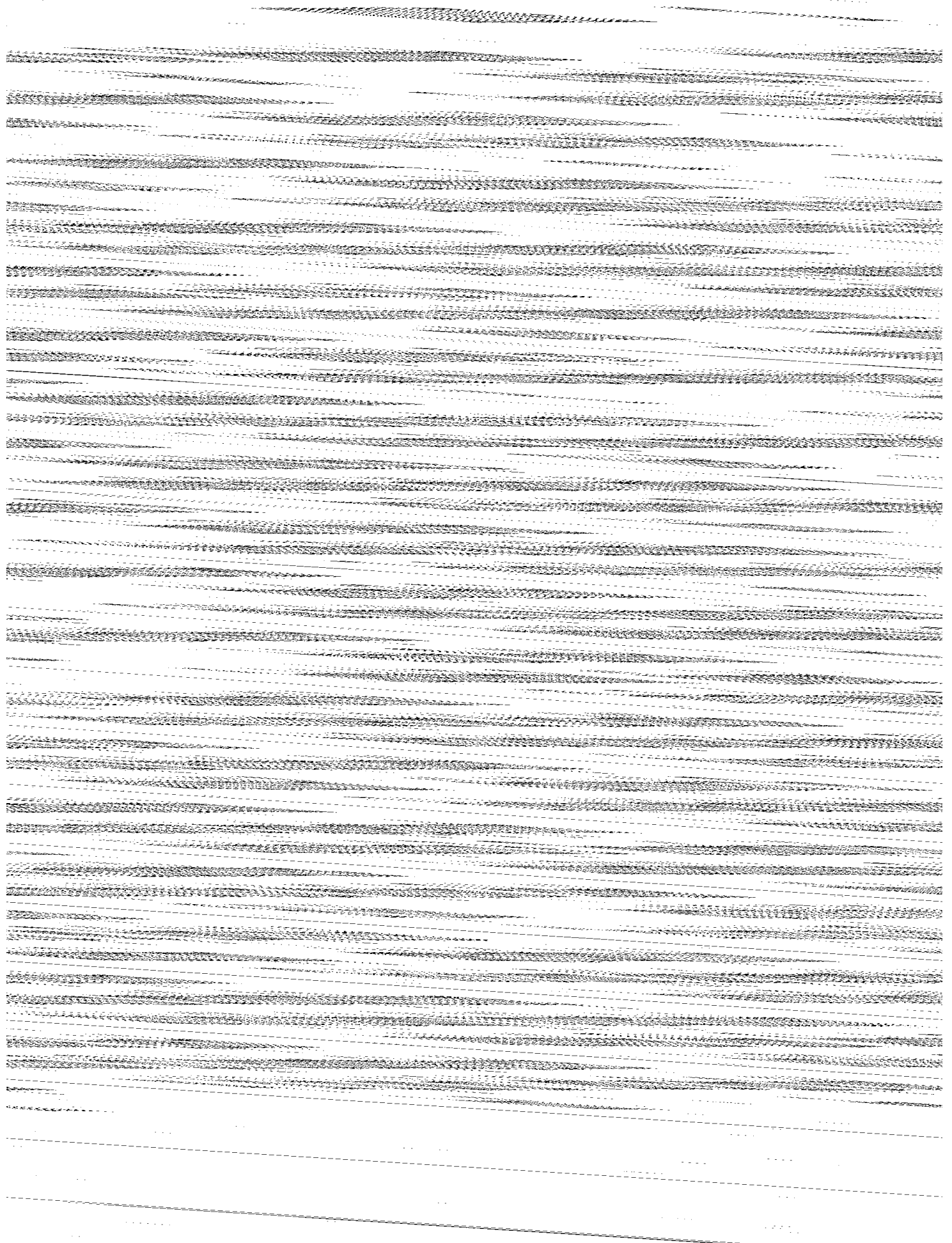
"Oh, yes, you've guessed it at last. Glanvil—it's Glanvil again, Louise. Come back from the dead in the most romantic fashion imaginable!"

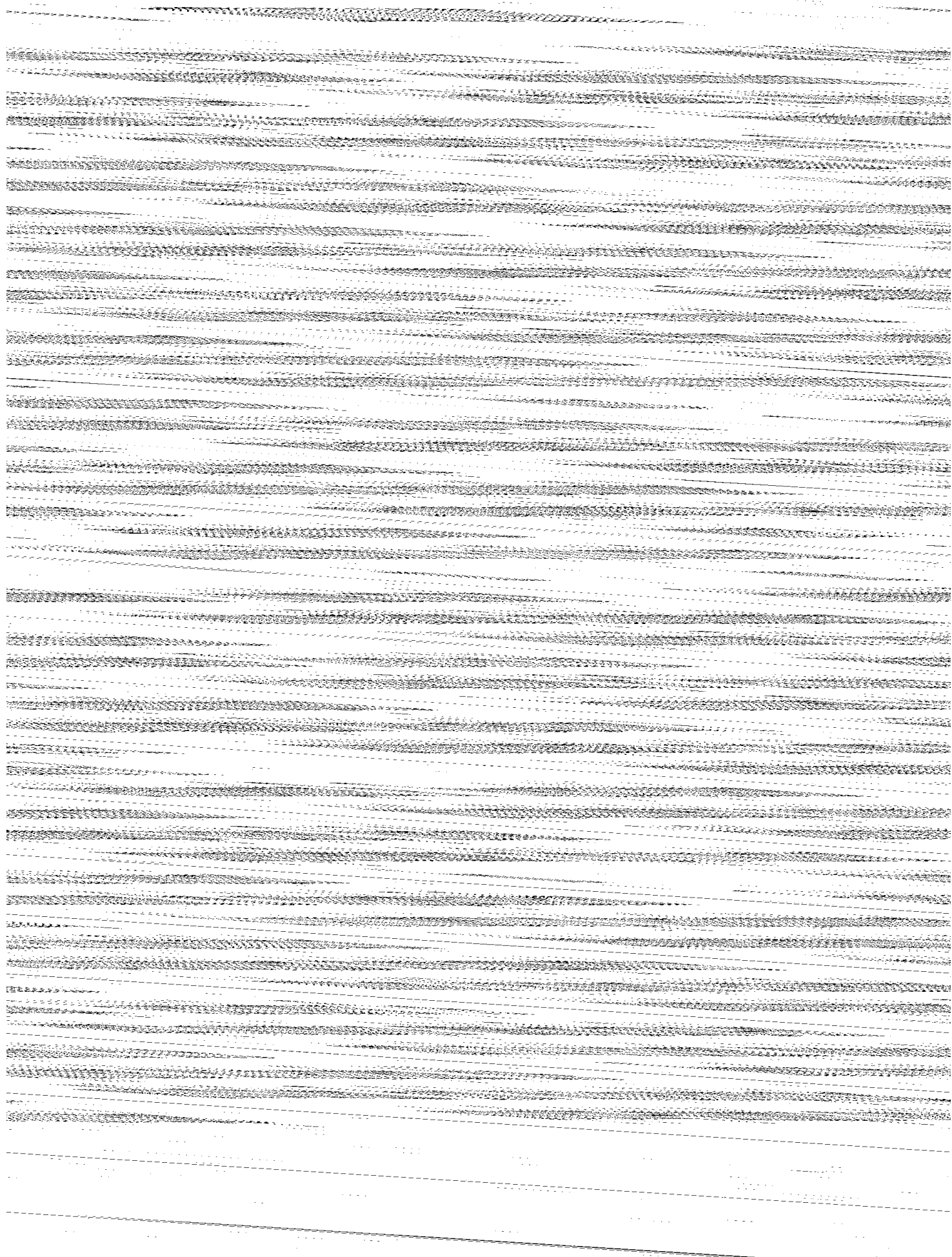
"It's Winsor Glanvil come back!" she gasped out. "No, I can't believe it!"

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H









Her voice trembled in such a way that the sheriff's weak heart trembled also.

"But if they take you, Winsor?"

"I intend that they shall. And, besides, I have some debts to pay, some money that's got to be returned to various parties in order to square my account with the world. I've seen the worst that they can do to a man, and I'm not afraid of it. I carry with me the sign of their strength. Put up your hand, dear."

She raised her hand, and he forced the soft finger tips over the ragged scar that ran down his face—until she shuddered and shrank from it.

"It's as though I could feel my own flesh torn! Oh, horrible!" she said. "Why did you make me do it?"

"Because, after all, we must both remember. It is a sign——"

"Of horrible brutality!"

"Of justice, Kate," said he.

And just then the Silver King came to join the happy pair.

THE END.

TWO KINDS OF EAGLES

IN the United States there are only two well-marked eagles, the American white-headed or bald eagle, which ranges over nearly the whole of North America, and the golden eagle, which wanders over every great continent except South America and Australia. In this country it is mainly confined to the region west of the Mississippi Valley.

The American eagle frequents both coasts, but is more common in Florida, the Great Lakes, and in the Northwest, particularly Alaska. Here, because of its greater size, the eagle is distinguished as a special variety, and the Territorial legislature has put a price upon its head. Since this bird is an indigenous American, and the term "white-headed" is cumbersome, and the name "bald eagle" is obviously inappropriate, it seems best to call our national bird by the popular designation, "American eagle."

PIUTE LEADER'S RESTING PLACE

THE tomb of one of the great Northwest Indians, Chief Nampuh, is believed to have been recently located. An ancient Indian grave, which may hold the remains of the famous Piute leader after whom the Idaho city of Nampa was named, was located a short time ago by R. W. Limbert, whose explorations in the region called Craters of the Moon, are accepted by scientific students.

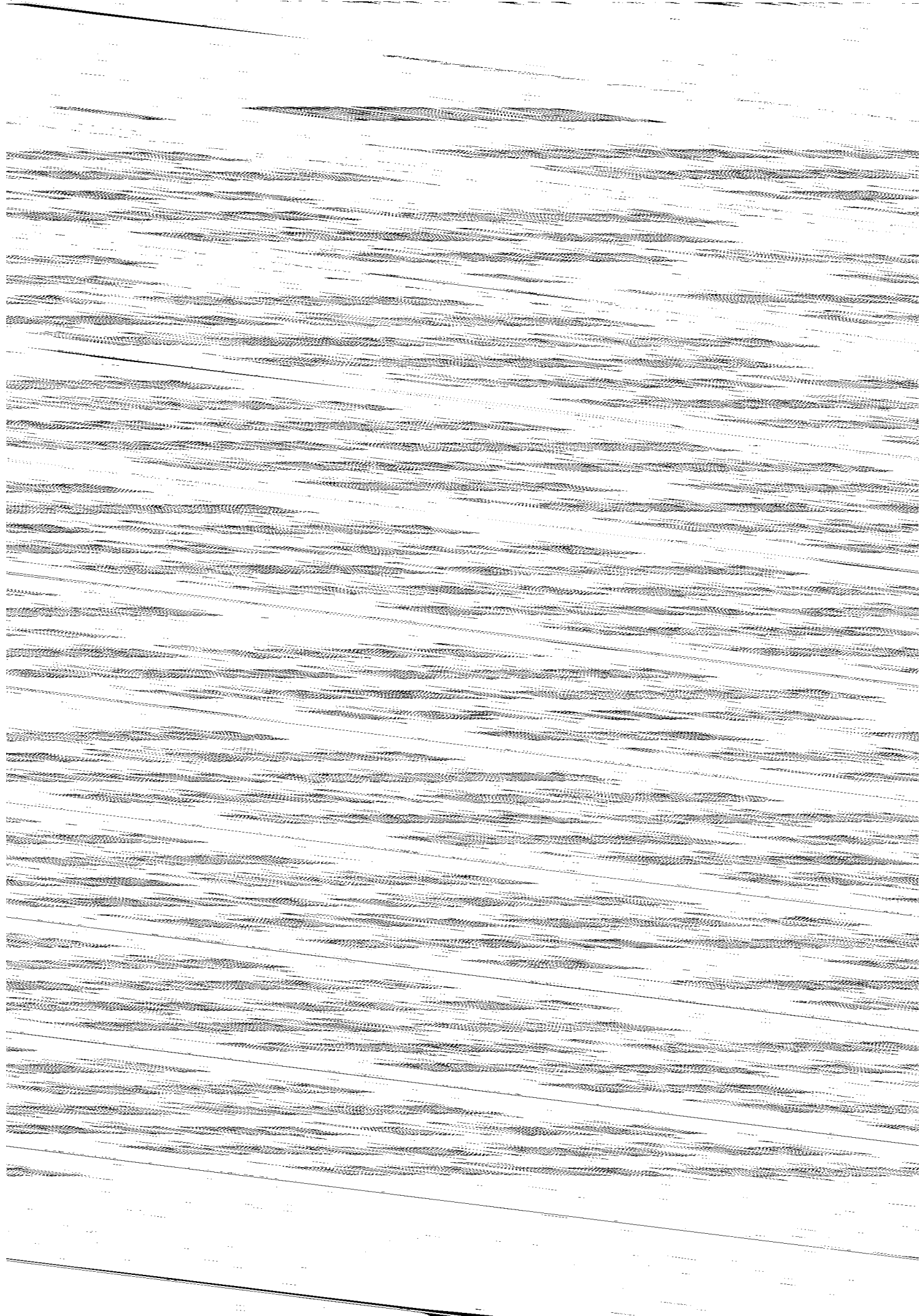
During some recent explorations in the district, Limbert found a flat rock upon which there was carved an arrow. Following the given direction, he located other rocks so marked. The end of the narrow trail was a huge mound of sandstones, with a flat stone resting on top. This was crudely engraved with the figure of an Indian showing very large feet and hands; also a circle, the death sign of the Piute tribes.

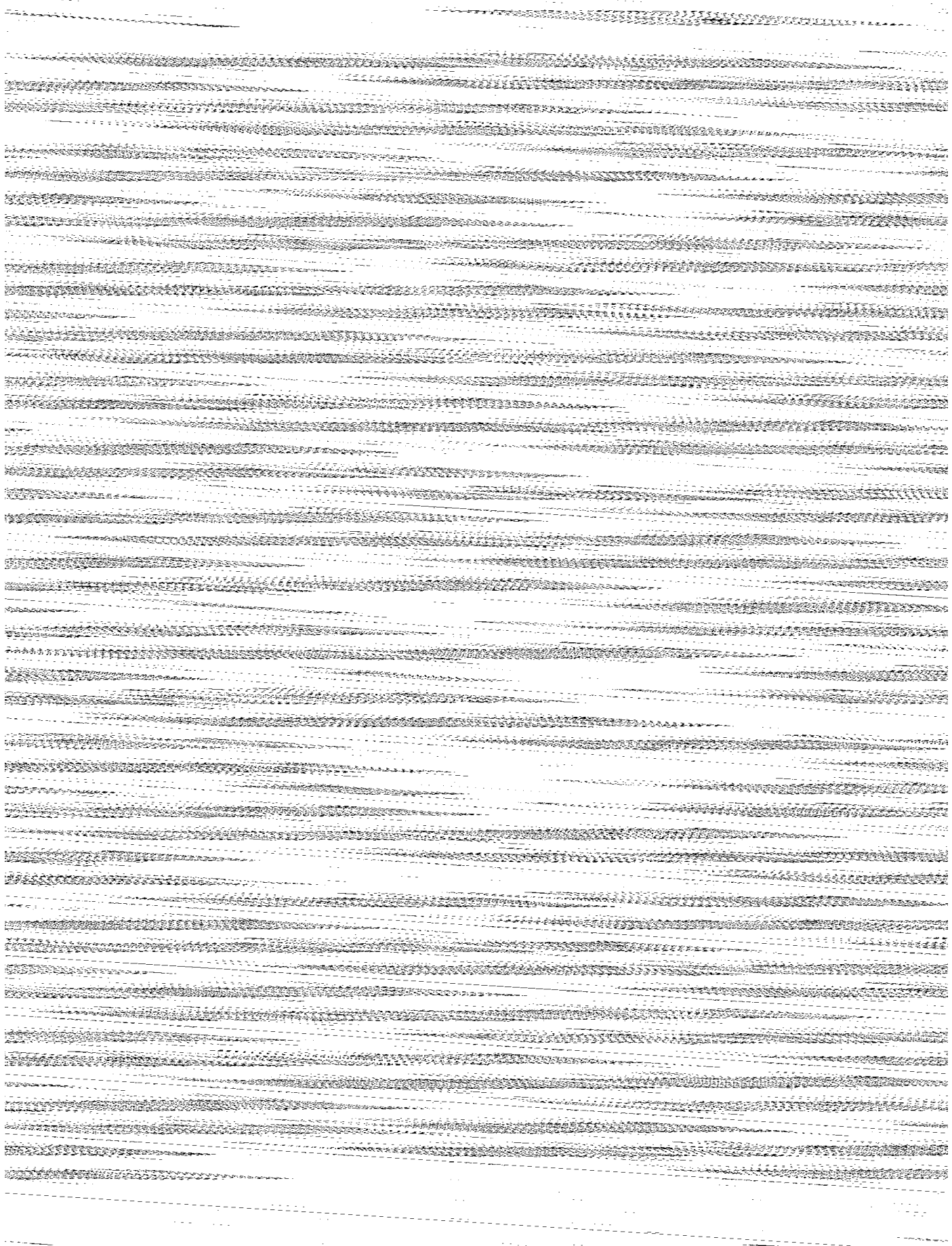
The renowned chief, hero of a hundred wars with Western tribes and whites, is reported to have had abnormally large feet and hands. It is a tradition that each foot was six inches wide and eighteen inches long.

Although no excavations have been attempted, the effort of the carver to indicate the large feet and hands leads the explorer to believe this spot marks the tomb of the chief. It is supposed a number of interesting articles of historic value will be uncovered beneath this pile of flat rocks.



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"My gosh, Dad, what's happened to you? You look like you was a somebody."

"I am somebody," said Dad. "I am one of the leading citizens of Cold Deck and vice president of the Chamber of Commerce. I says to myself: 'For more than seventy years you have never looked like anything, and it is high time you did something about it.' So I went down to the barber shop, had my hair cut, and had the barber point my beard, and when it comes to looking like somebody, Marcus T. Chadwick, himself, hasn't anything on me."

Dad had managed to get some of the ancient kinks out of his bones, and was standing erect. His attire was faultless; certainly he was destined to be the outstanding figure in Cold Deck that night.

Now he strolled about the New Deal Café with a cigar tilted at a rakish angle.

"The only thing I'm kicking about," said the old sour dough, "is the fact that there ain't going to be any ladies there. I'm a slicker, if I do say it myself."

The banquet started with an Alaskan crab cocktail, and from then on, nearly everything except the coffee and the cigars was an Alaskan product. It was an educational dinner, and Marcus T. Chadwick did not hesitate to say so when he made his speech.

"In no town in Alaska," he said, "have we been so royally entertained as we have here. In fact, I might say, that in no town in the States, were we ever so finely entertained, and thus it is with the deepest of regrets that I inform you that it is very doubtful if we will develop any of the attractive propositions offered us at the time. You are men of few words; so are we. We cannot in fairness, to either you or ourselves, partake of your food, shake your hands, and leave you in hopes, when down in our hearts we have decided ad-

versely. That would not be shooting square. It would be easier for us perhaps to break the news later, but we don't do business that way. Neither do you. Other things being equal, Cold Deck would win. In the not-far-distant future, perhaps some of us will invest here. If we do not, certainly others will.

"We carry to our Eastern friends a glorious story of the country and its possibilities, but other things are not equal. Some of us have interests of a small nature elsewhere in Alaska, and naturally, we wish to develop those first. I thank you."

They were good losers, and they liked Chadwick's way, and they applauded his speech. Their keen disappointment was covered with smiles, and the entertainment proceeded as though nothing had happened. Toward the end of the banquet Chadwick's general manager made his talk.

"I must confess," he said with an embarrassed smile, "that while I did not expect to pick up gold in Alaskan creeks, yet I rather hoped to pick up a stray nugget. Perhaps there are creeks where a man might pan a nugget or two, but——"

"There are," interrupted Tubby Willows with a shout. "And whenever you say the word, I'll give every man here a chance to pan real nuggets, or at least see it done."

The manager's eyes twinkled. "Thank you, Mr. Willows," he said. "If it is in order at the present time, I am frank to admit that I would get a kick out of panning a bar, dressed in evening clothes. I do not mean that the bar is dressed in evening clothes; I mean that I am dressed in evening clothes as I pan. I don't care if I find only a nugget as big as a pinhead. I want to go back to New York and say that panning gold in Alaska is a gentleman's sport as well as vocation, that on occasion, men have been known to pan

bars in evening dress, and that I had done so myself. The others can stand by and watch."

Tubby Willows had not prepared for anything just like this. For a moment he was speechless; then he faced Flapjack.

"Mr. Chairman, I notice that the cigars have been smoked, and some of our guests are getting uneasy. I move that we adjourn to Boulder Creek."

The motion was seconded by each of the twenty-five guests present, and most of the hosts.

Outside, several automobile trucks rumbled up. Most of Cold Deck looked on in amazement, while their leading citizens and guests climbed into the trucks and seated themselves on rough boards. The midnight sun was swinging just above the horizon. Presently it would drop behind the peaks, linger a few moments, and rise again. The twilight would be continuous. It seemed incredible, and yet it was true.

Inwardly Tubby thanked his lucky stars he had salted the bars that afternoon. Gold pans, picks, and shovels were in readiness—more, in fact, than would be needed, for it was apparent that only the manager and a few others cared to experience the novelty of panning gold, thus attired. In fact, it was doubtful if Marcus T. Chadwick approved. He was just a little more dignified than usual. He seemed to be leaning just a little further backward, as he climbed to the driver's seat beside Flapjack Meehan. Overcoats were unnecessary; the air was balmy, and scores of jack rabbits and an occasional ptarmigan were seen in the road ahead. The road ran for perhaps four miles, was narrow, winding, and sometimes rough in spots. Then it ended, and the trucks wound their way through birch and small spruce, passing through by sheer weight in places. Presently they stopped, and the crowd gathered around for instructions.

Tubby Willows stopped at the first bar.

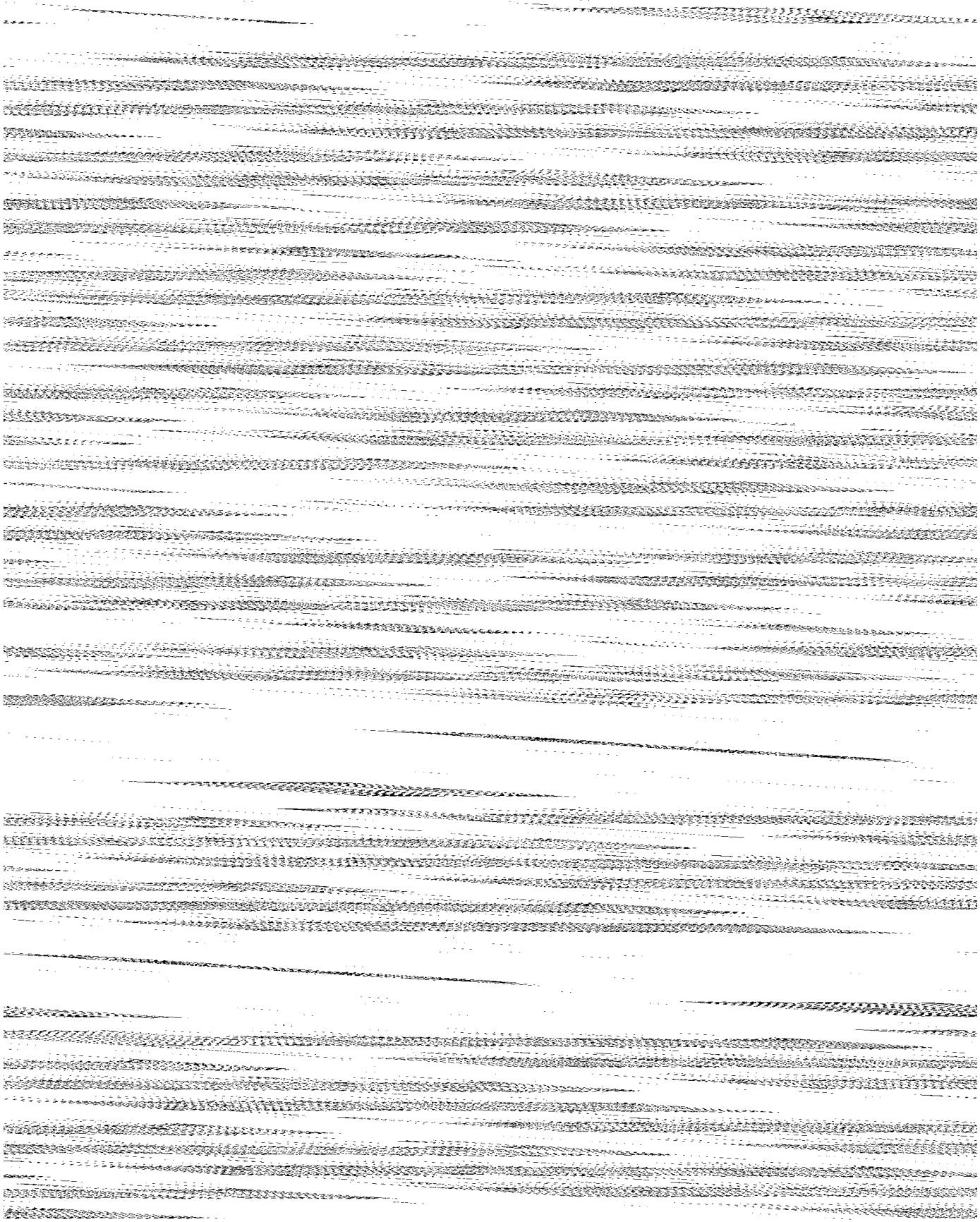
"It's done like this," he explained, and shoveling gravel into the pan he dipped up the right amount of water and commenced the circular movement that comes with long experience. The gravel being lighter, is gradually washed off, leaving the gold, if any, in the bottom. By a little clever work on Tubby's part, the manager commenced digging in just the right spot. He had a lot to learn about handling a pan, but what he lacked in knowledge he made up in enthusiasm. His hands were actually nervous as he poked around among the remaining contents of the pan in search of the nuggets he sought.

"I struck it," he suddenly yelled, and his companions gathered around.

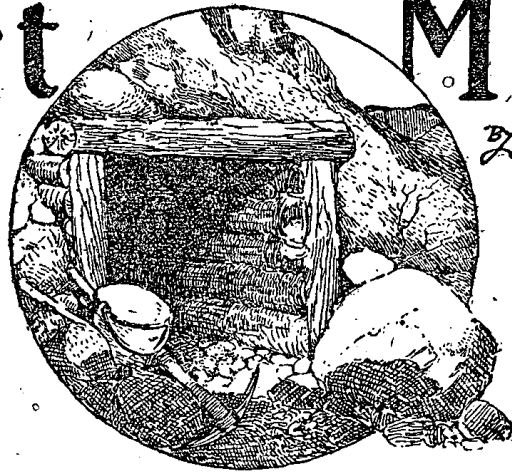
Tubby Willows started a wink, and then he stopped it. There were two nuggets in the pan, and more than a trace of gold dust. Flapjack and Tubby took just one brief glance, and their hearts commenced to pound. To a novice in placer mining, gold looks alike in color and formation, but to the keen eye of the veteran miner, there is considerable difference. The gold that Tubby Willows had quietly placed there was old and worn through the action of time, and the elements, it had been carried a considerable distance from the mother lode, but the other gold in the pan, real gold of Boulder Creek, had not traveled so far, and the stain was different.

"My gosh!" exclaimed Tubby, and then he grabbed an empty pan and shovel. A minute later his shirt front crumpled as he squatted down and commenced to pan the gravel. Water eddied about his dress shoes and soaked his silk socks, but he did not notice it. His eyes were upon the pan. Fifty feet away Dad Simms was digging feverishly. The tails of his claw-hammer coat eddied in the stream just behind him. He was a swift second behind Tubby Willows.

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Lost Mines



By *Roderick
O'Hagan*

THE ARCTIC COPPER DEPOSITS



TWO hundred and fifty-four years ago—May second, 1670, to be exact—the Hudson's Bay Co.—the governor and company of adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay—received its charter from King Charles the Second, and forthwith got busy adventuring among the Indians and Eskimos of arctic Canada.

Among the earliest trade goods in demand by the natives were knives and needles, the former to replace the soft copper knives in use by the Indians. So much copper was in evidence in the form of ornaments, weapons, and implements that after debating the matter for seventy years, a British parliamentary committee was formed in 1749 to inquire into the prospective mineral wealth of the territory.

Among the witnesses to testify was a Mr. Joseph Robson, who had spent some years in the company's domain. He testified that he had seen natives with chunks of pure copper up to a pound and a half, which they smelted by cooking the ore in a fire until it ran. Alexander Browne, a surgeon in the employ of the company, said that he had seen both copper and copper ore at Prince of Wales Fort on the

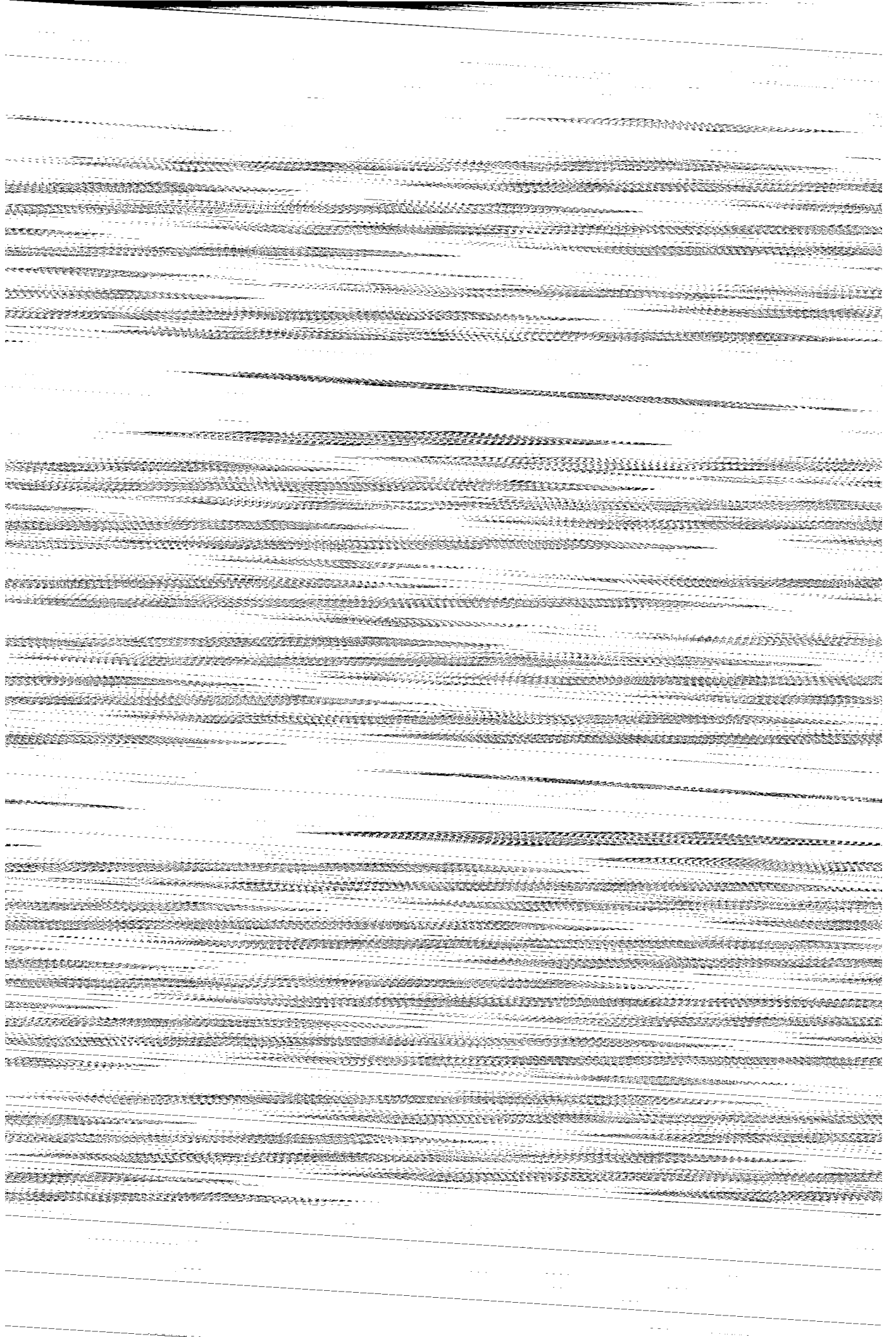
Churchill River, and which the northern Indians had informed him "grew" on an isthmus of land about four hundred miles distant. He had searched for it and failed to find it.

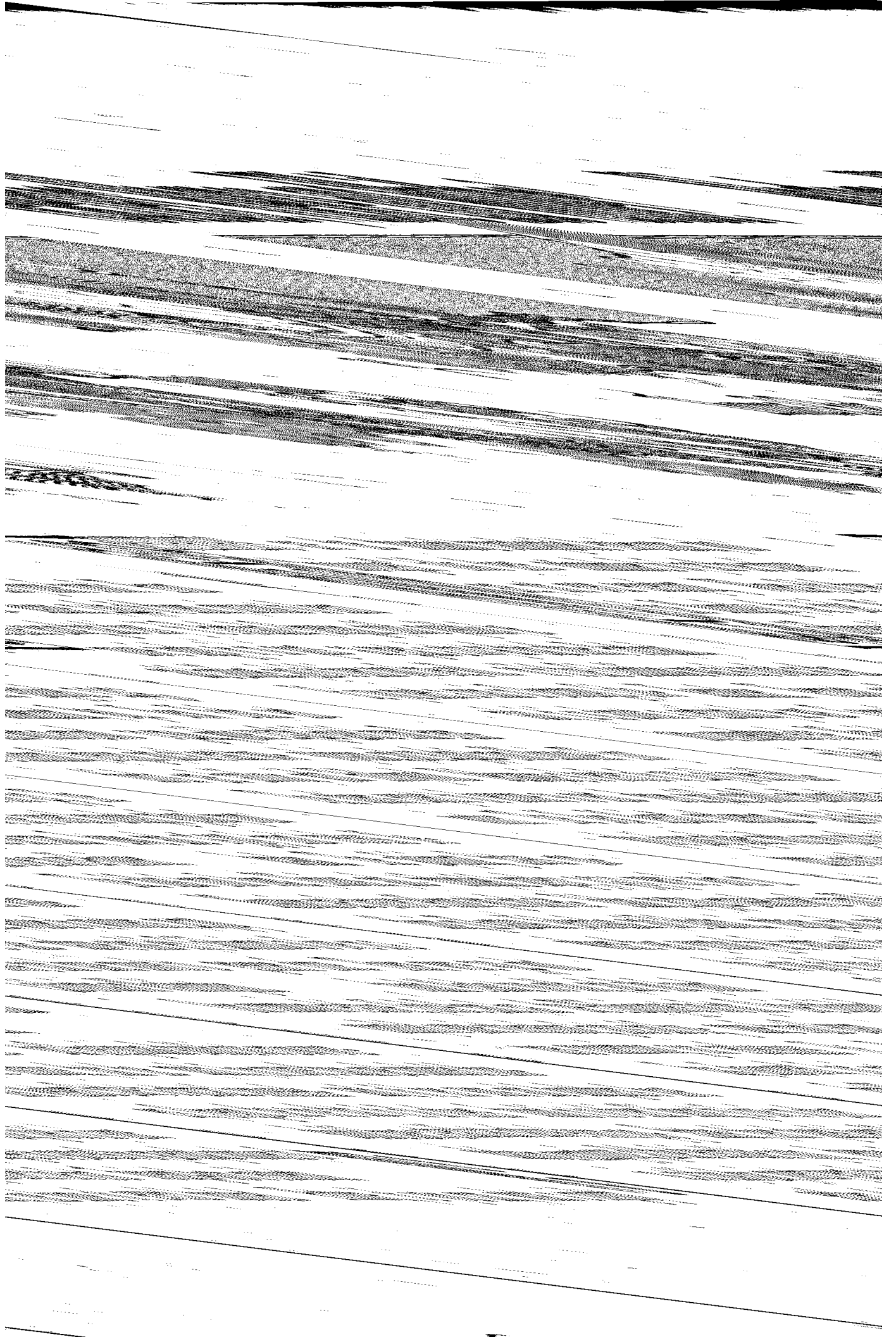
Doctor Thompson, another of the company's surgeons, informed the committee that he had seen quantities of copper ore brought to Whale Cove—that he had searched for its source for two years, but failed to find it. Christopher Bannister, armorer and gunsmith to the company, told a similar story and showed beautiful shoe buckles his apprentice had fashioned by smelting the ore.

Twenty years later, in 1771, the company sent Samuel Hearne on an expedition to find the copper. He failed, but the trail was getting warm. A certain tribe had become known as the Copper Indians, and a range of mountains as the Copper Mountains.

Fifty years later, in 1821, Sir John Franklin visited the Copper Mountains. He found copper weapons and utensils in common use, but failed to find the deposit.

Before the Canadian senate committee in 1888, sixty years later, Doctor G. M. Dawson, director of the geological survey, admitted that they had nearly traced it, but not quite. Bishop Clut,





tumult, what plans and preparations, what buying of tickets, what crowded trains, what slow clanking of covered wagons, is embraced in the fact that 662,451 of those living in the State of Washington were born in the other forty-seven commonwealths, and 265,292 in foreign lands.

Denver is in Colorado, as is well known, but her people come from other States in such numbers that you have only one chance in four of finding a native. Of those at present living in the mile-high city, 281 were born in New Hampshire, 1,434 had departed from New Jersey, 4,110 left Michigan, 13,951 came from Missouri and were shown Pikes Peak as it appears from Cheesman Park, 1,061 came from Alabama, 10,109 left Kansas flat, and 1,881 left New Mexico to live in Denver. One came from far Samoa. In all, 136,658 were born in other States than Colorado.

Consider the difference between Wyoming and Europe. In the latter benighted, tax-ridden, war-scarred region, hard and fast frontiers, bristling fortifications, red-braided officials, laws, differences in tongue and customs, keep folks in one place from generation to generation. To live in Wyoming all one has to do is to hitch up or crank up and go. As a consequence, 2,443 Montanans, 16,445 Nebraskans, 7,075 Kansans, 7,202 Coloradans, 5,410 "Utaws," and 1,737 "Idahoese" have moved to a square State.

But Wyoming is generous, and though having less to give in the way of people, 2,631 of her own have gone to Montana to live, 2,474 to Nebraska, 596 to Kansas, 3,491 to Colorado, 3,322 to Utah, and 3,182 to Idaho. Inspired by the success of a certain well-known "Virginian," 778 from the same State have gone to Wyoming in the hope of getting themselves pretty school-teachers—and they are quite willing to shoot a Tampas or two to do it!

Five million people born east of the Mississippi River are now living west of it. One million people born west of the Mississippi have moved east of it, doubtless to occupy private offices in the New York skyscrapers.

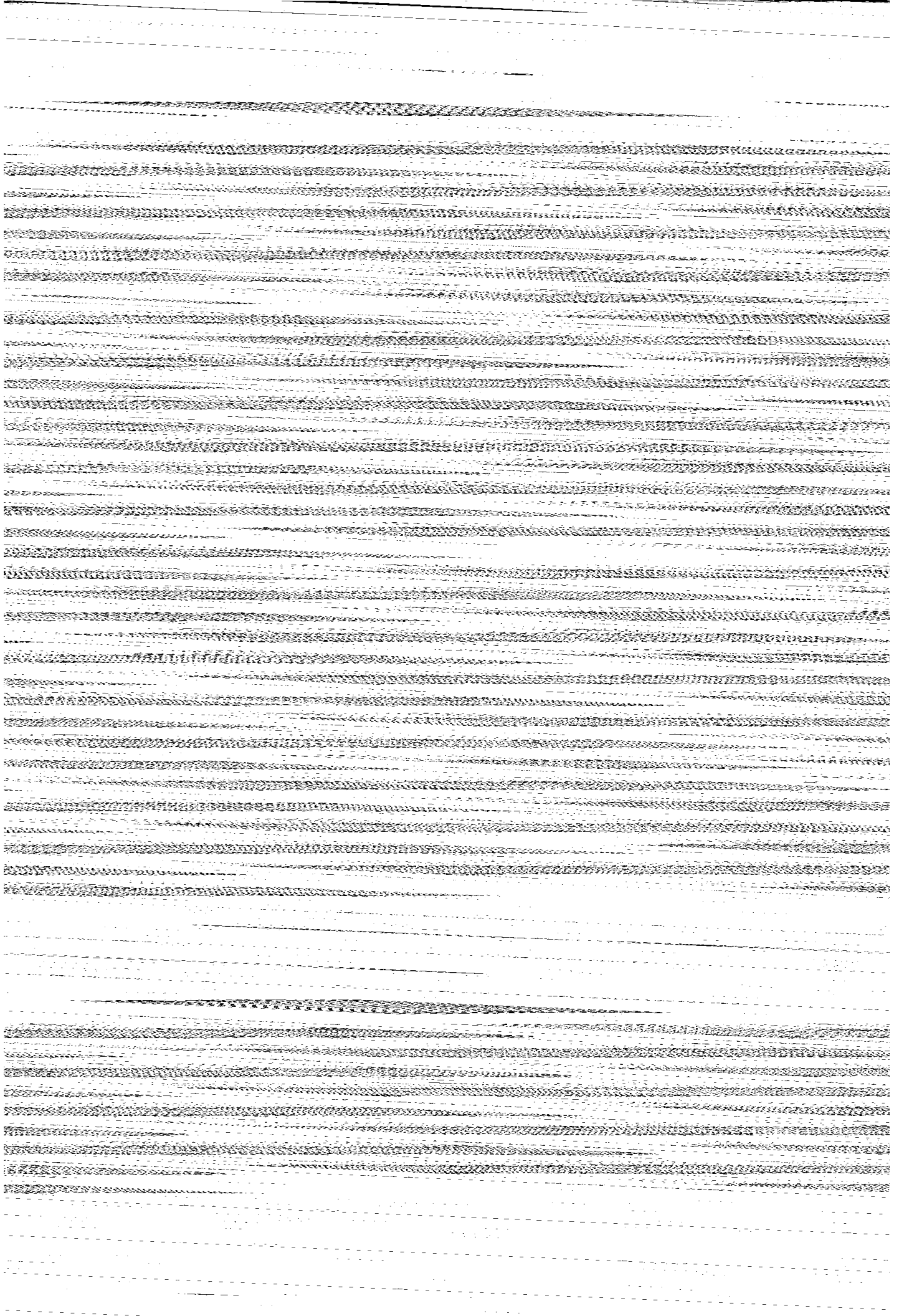
Even so young a State as New Mexico, which has a larger proportion of stay-at-homes than any other in the West, has sent some of her sons and daughters to every other State. Twenty-nine have gone as far as they could, and are living in Maine; 16,212 went only a little way and settled in Colorado; 917 fill those big New York jobs, and 151 in West Virginia sometimes wish they were back on the Rio Grande.

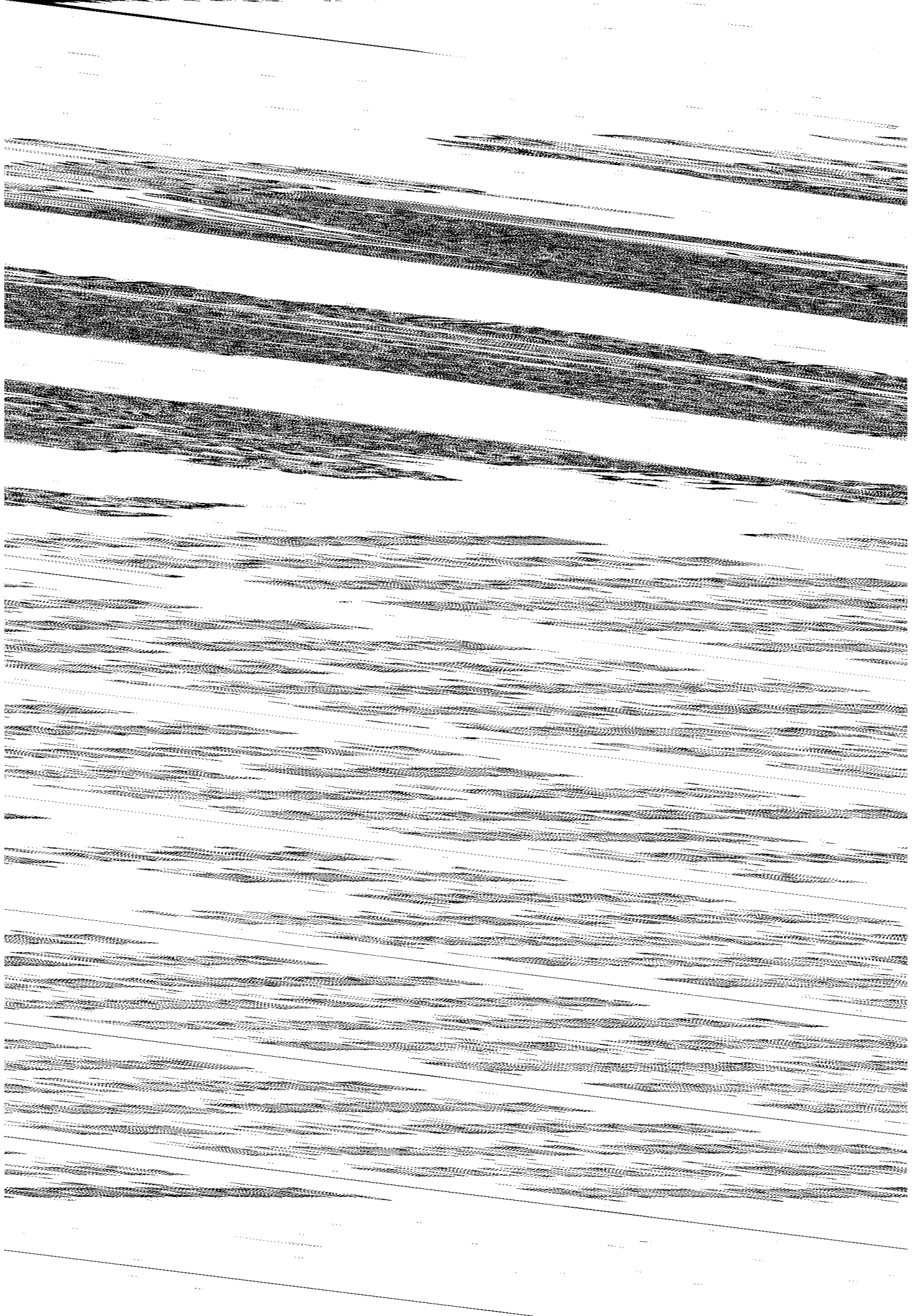
And Kansas, where are not thy children? They are scattered as far as the winds blow—600,000 of them to the islands of the sea and the uttermost mountain vales. Not a city but knows them by scores, hundreds, or thousands. Not a Western county but has heard at first hand tales of John Brown, of grasshoppers, and of eight-foot corn.

Without calling them into court to explain their desertion of their native State, it is a sad duty to state that 102,928 have moved to Oklahoma, that 83,712 went to Missouri, nearly half of whom merely crossed the State line into Kansas City. As many as 13,282 journeyed to Idaho, while only 82 were caught living in Delaware. California is proud of 62,885 of them, and 1,805 sojourn in the District of Columbia. Colorado harbors 55,045. In all the five adjoining States there are 300,000 Kansans.

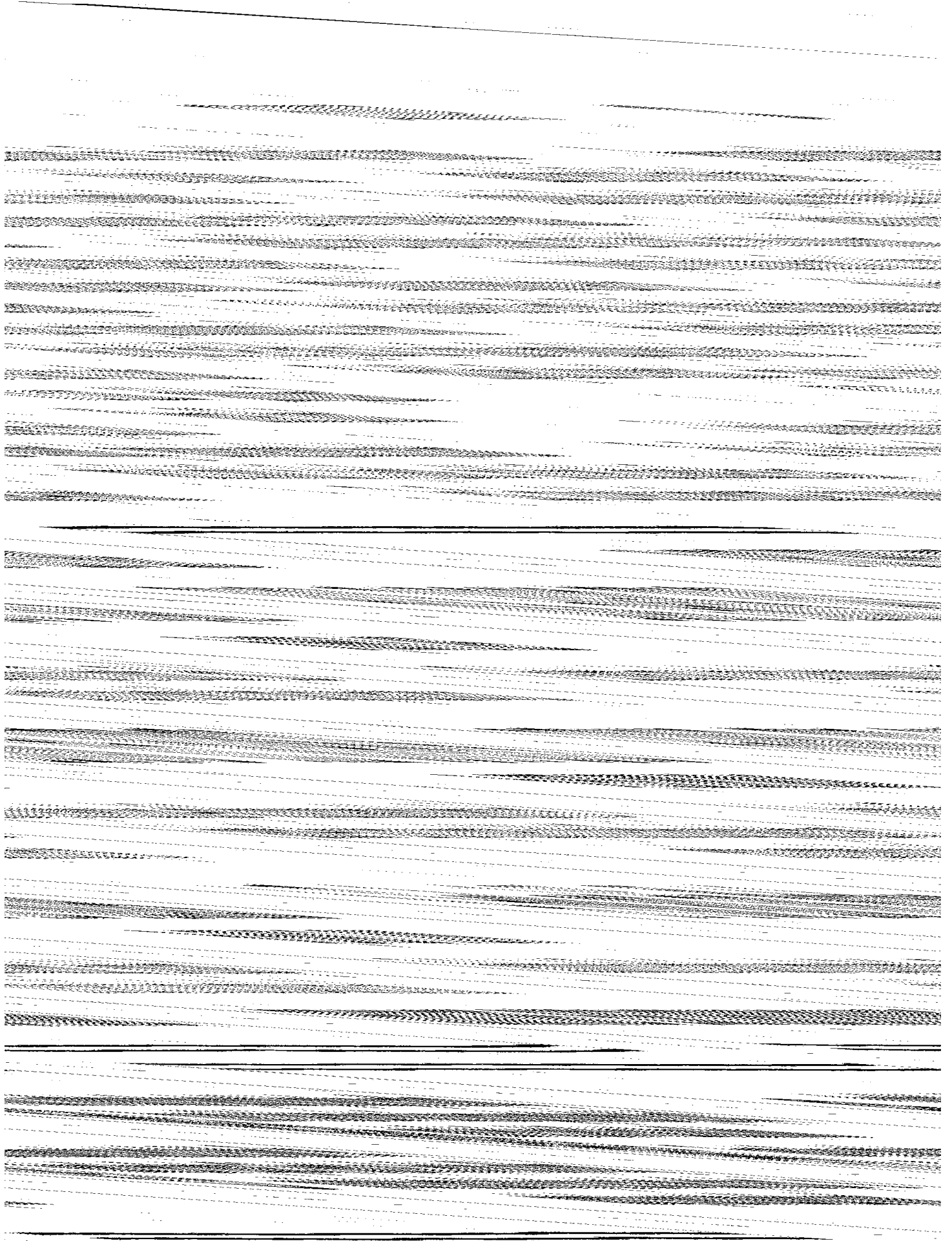
Indians? There are still Indians in the West, and they are the only class that live where they were born. Our Uncle found about 250,000 of them in his domain, more than a fifth of whom live in Oklahoma. Arizona has 32,989; New Mexico, 19,512; California, 17,360; South Dakota, 16,384; Idaho, 3,098; and Wyoming only 1,343.

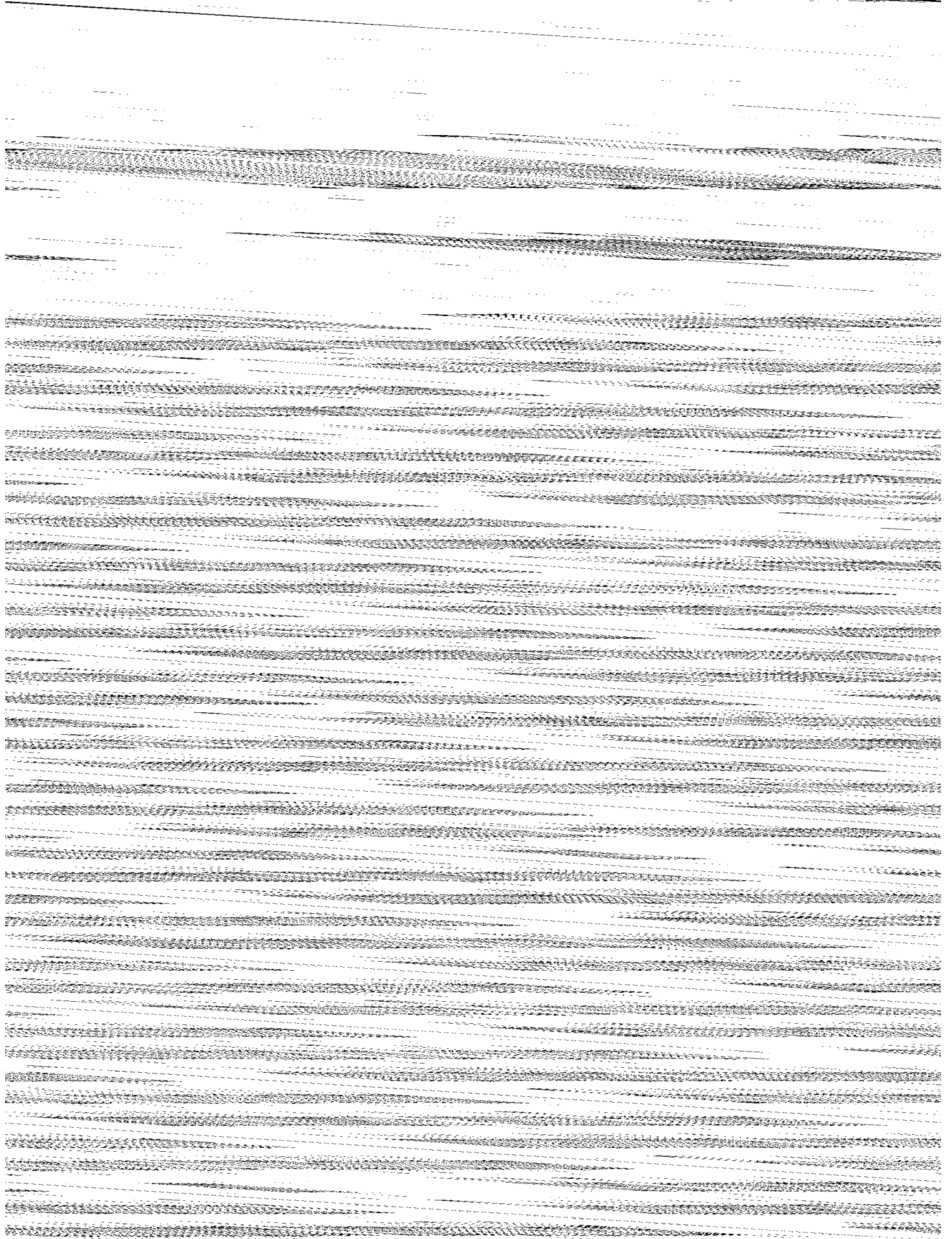
Other prominent Westerners are

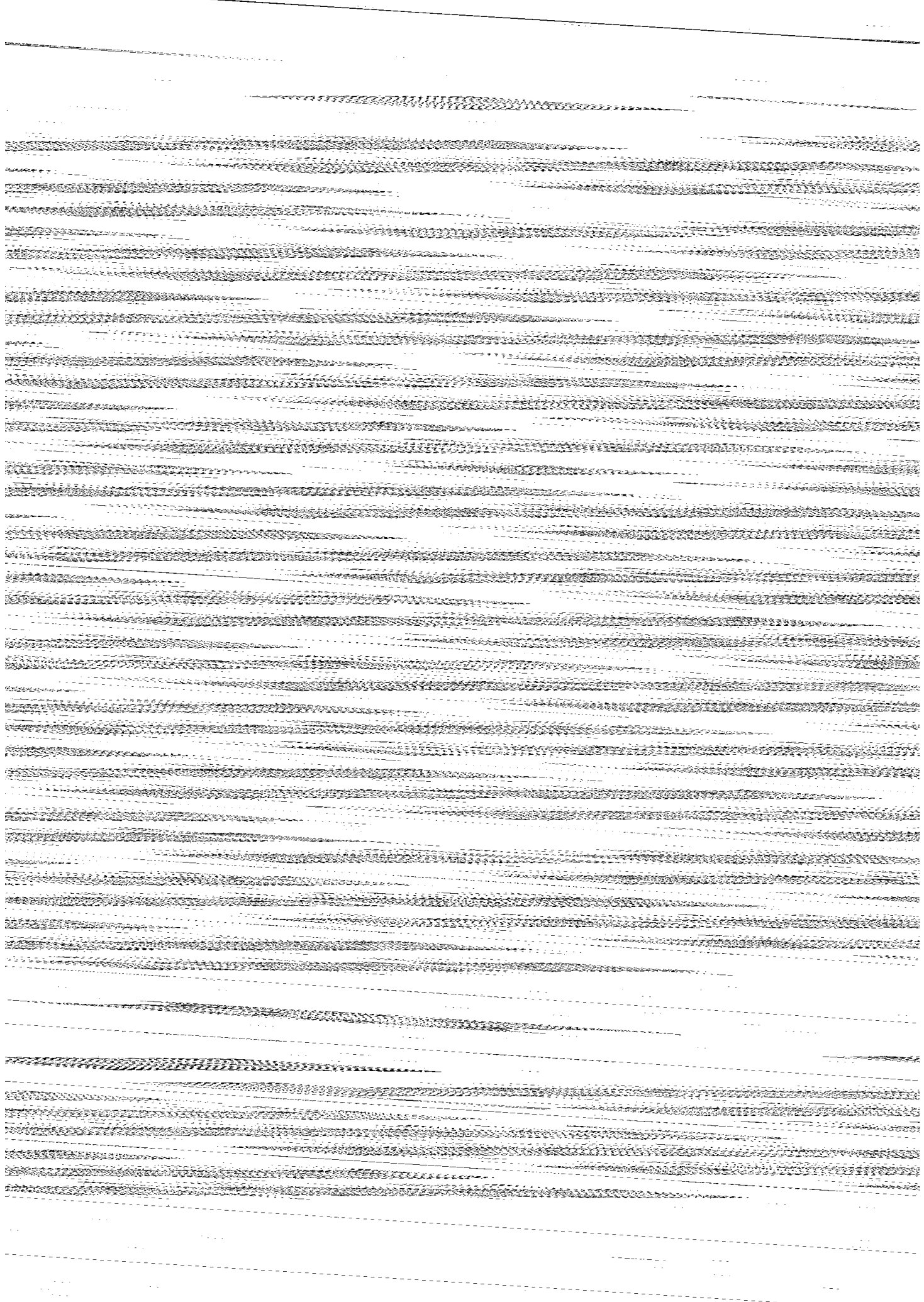


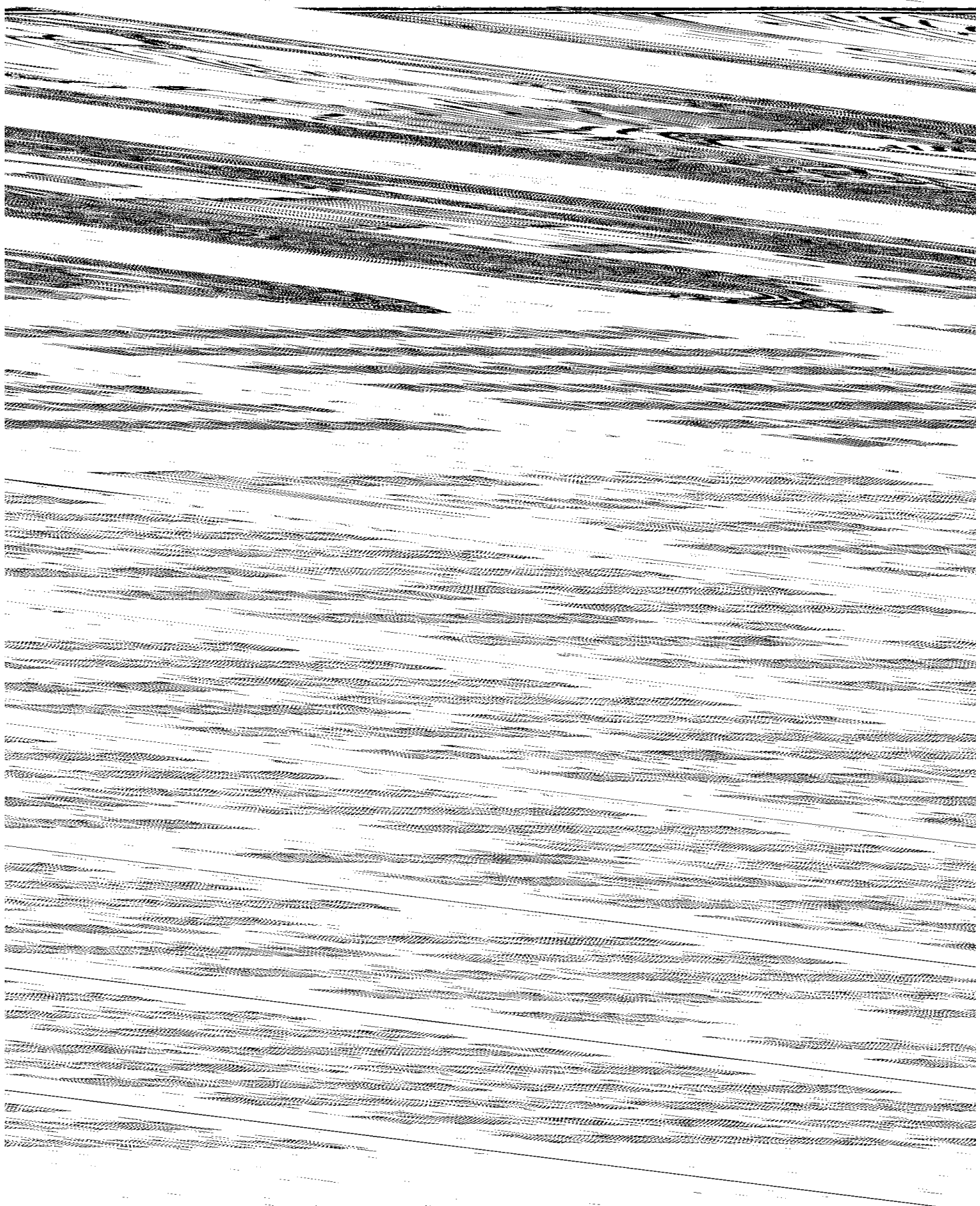


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[The page contains approximately 30 lines of text that is completely illegible due to extreme horizontal streaking and noise.]

me quit pulling leather, and threw a rope practicing until my arm would play out.

I met the family of that old-timer, Bruce Haynes, who had a letter in the August 23d issue, in Hudson, Wyoming. His brothers, Mack and Wallace, will hold me out in my statement about riding bucking horses, breaking colts, et cetera, at that time. Other Hudson folks, Lloyd McDowell, Pierce Ricketts, or Ned Vaughn, will also bear out my statements.

Tenderfoot, should you come out West, never say quit; bring what they commonly call guts with you and use them. If they buck you crawl right back on, and if the boys job you stay right with 'em, and you will succeed.

So far I have ridden in a few contests, and while I am not what the boys call real forked I can get by.

Most boys when they leave home have a foolish notion about changing their names. I was one of those, and the name I chose, the one by which the people in Wyoming will know me, is Jack McCauley. Growing older and realizing my early foolishness, I have taken my right name again, which is

E. A. FALLON.

Care of Eugene A. Bond, 15-16 Bank Annex Building, Leadville, Colo.

A sister who would like to hear from those interested in traveling, says:

I have just returned from a trip to the Grand Cañon of Arizona. At first glimpse from the edge of the abyss the cañon seems a primeval void hemmed in everywhere, except skyward, by the solid framework of our earth—rocks, rocks, and yet more rocks, millions of years old. Miles below the rim a tiny stream is seen—the Colorado River. From the rim it appears to move very slowly, but you find when you reach the cañon that it is a regular torrent. The various trips down into the cañon are made on mules. You traverse a very narrow zigzag trail until you reach the river where you have lunch before beginning the return trip back up the trail.

PAULINE ANDERSON.

609 North Oregon Street, El Paso, Texas.

Raymond E. Phillippi, R. F. D. 2, Box 1064C, Inglewood, California, wants correspondents from any part of the world. He will give information about the southern part of his State to all who wish it.

Hello Girl, care of The Tree, is planning a Western trip this summer and is looking for a girl companion. Even

if you aren't interested in the trip she'd like to hear from you; she can handle two hundred letters, she says.

"I expect to spend the winter with my parents at a small ranch high up in the Colorado Rockies where winter sport abounds, and would like to find a clean young man who would be willing to contribute a small amount for his maintenance to stay with us." This offer comes from "Colorado." Send letters to him in my care, brothers.

Are you interested in the Canadian West? Then Maple, care of The Tree, wants to hear from you.

A fourteen-year-old sister, Ella Elmer, R. 2, Box 42, Newport, Washington, says: "I live on a one-thousand-acre farm. Timothy hay is the principal crop. Besides farming we keep from sixty to a hundred cattle and a few horses. Will some lonely girl like me please write?"

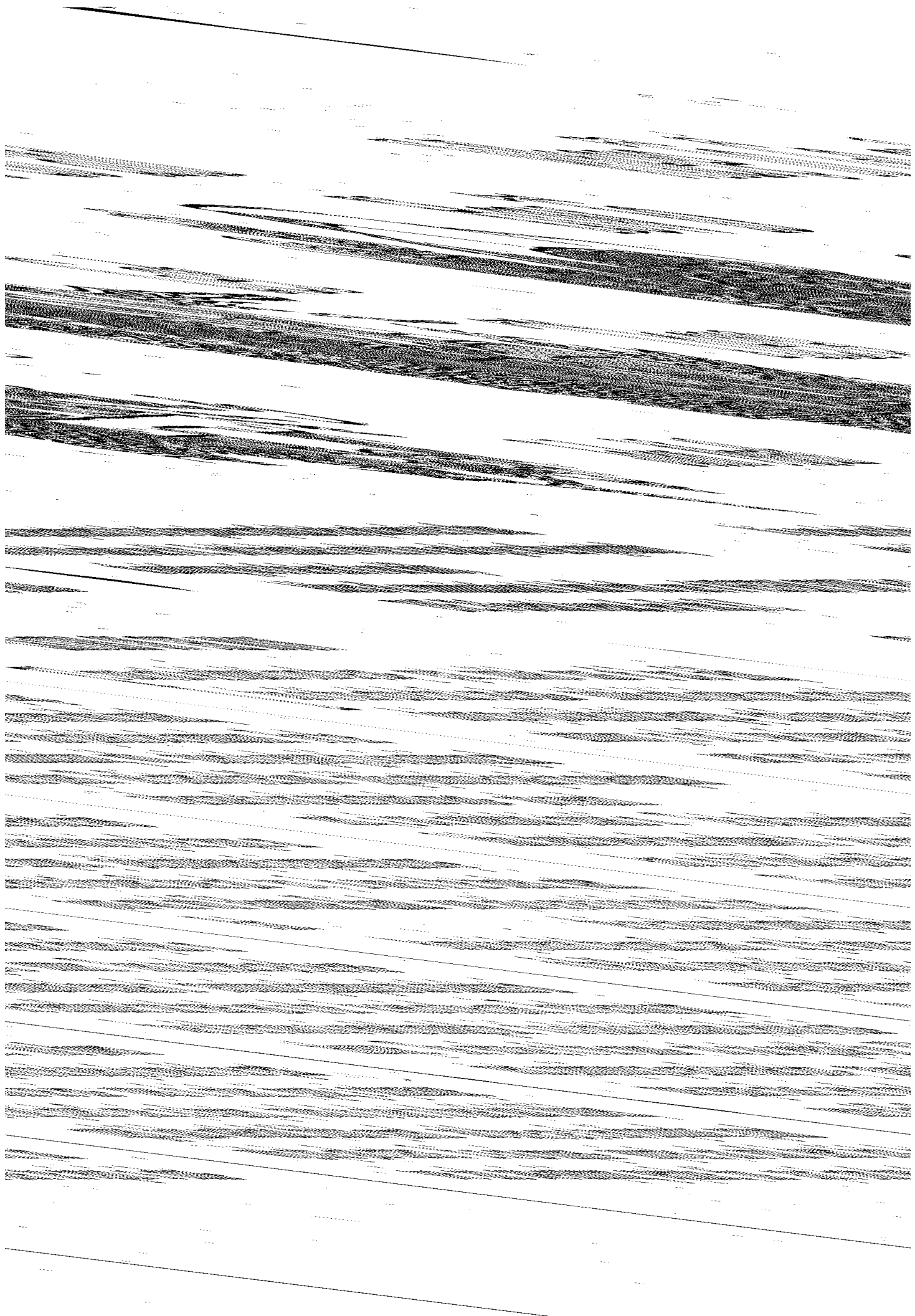
Walter Golba, 22 Gardner Street, Chicopee, Massachusetts, wants correspondents who work in lumber camps, especially in the States of California, Oregon and Washington.

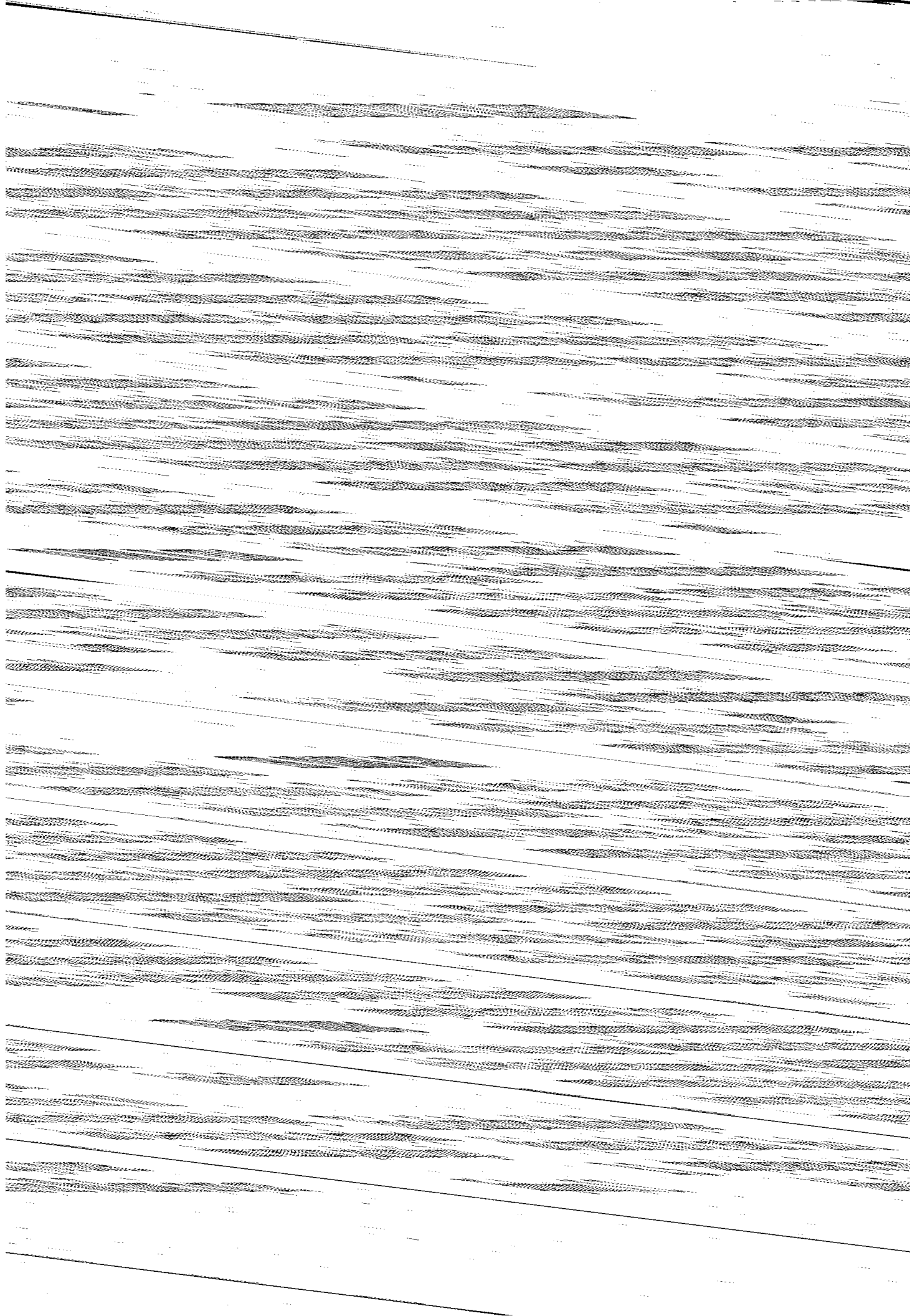
Mrs. Burrell L. Routh, Box 381, Huntington Beach, California, asks for letters from married sisters her age, twenty-two. She's especially interested to hear from those who have children; she has two little girls.

"I can tell The Gang some interesting stories of travel in the great Southwest," offers A. E. Kistner, 5643 Glenview Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Letters, letters, and more letters are wanted by Betty Gay-Mosco, 924 Main Street Walsenburg, Colorado. Be sure to answer 'em all now, Betty.

Has any one any information to impart about coffee growing in the tropics? If so, Ralph Anders, 5609 Quimby Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, would like to hear from you. Ralph has covered most of the old globe and offers to share his experience with those who think they may profit by them.





ABOUT HORSES

DEAR MR. NORTH: Did the white men bring horses to America, or were the Indians using horses before the coming of the Europeans? There is a wager on this.
Gettysburg, Pa.

JOHN P.

The Spaniards first introduced horses among the Aztecs and later to the Pueblo Indians. The horse was unknown to the Indians prior to the coming of the white men.

**MORE DATA ON OUR INDIAN POPULATION**

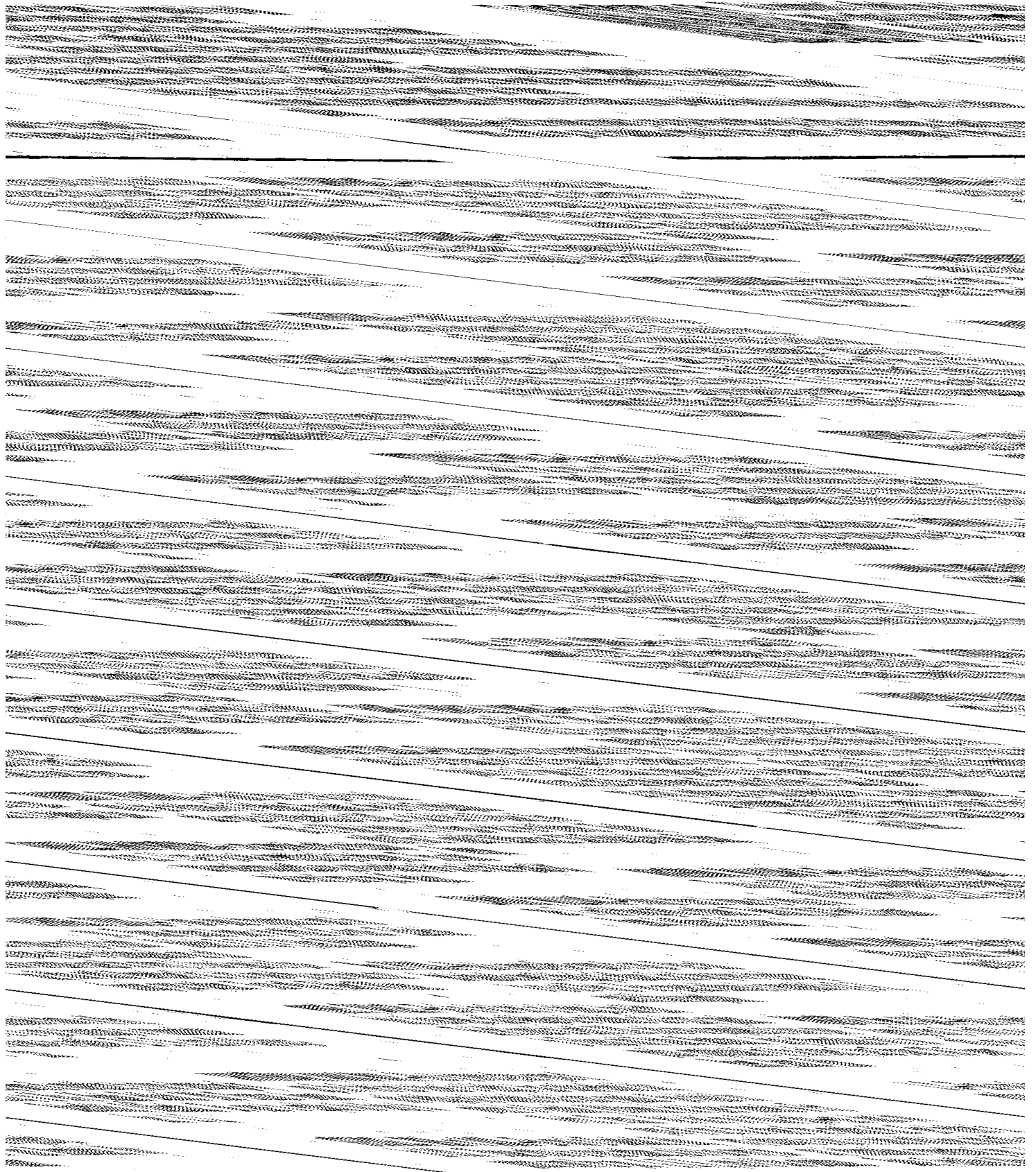
F. W. HODGE, of the Museum of the American Indian in New York, recently took exception to certain statements on the present and past population of our Indian tribes, which had been based on an announcement of the secretary of the interior. Mr. Hodge, who is an authority on things Indian, says the Indian Office announced there were now 346,962 Indians in the United States who are maintaining tribal relations, and some sixty thousand who have severed their tribal connections and are scattered among the general population.

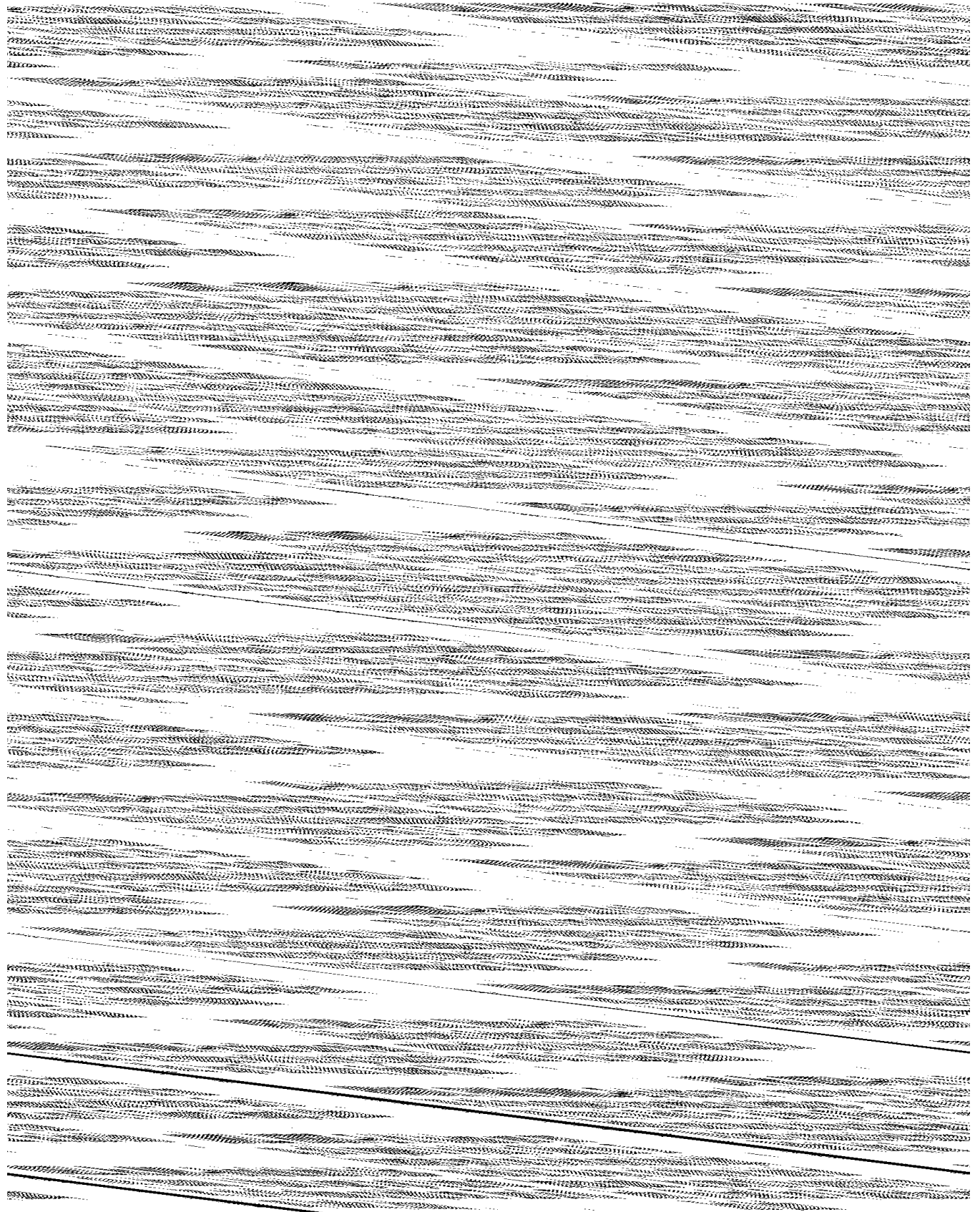
An editorial in the *New York Times* stated that it was doubtful if our country in the old days could have supported more Indians, and that it was just as doubtful if "they ever were any more numerous than now." We were inclined to accept this view, and now comes Mr. Hodge, with convincing new data, to show that both of the above deductions are untenable.

"If we exclude some of our Southwestern tribes, like the Navajos, the Apaches, and the Pueblos, which aggregate fifty-six thousand, said to be of full blood, it is exceedingly doubtful," he says, "whether ten per cent of the remaining 290,000 are full Indians. It is a well-known fact that any individual on the roll is an Indian, whether he have as little as a thirty-second or a sixty-fourth Indian blood.

"The statement that our territory could support no more Indians than at present can hardly stand the light. One must neglect even his school history to assert that the great Atlantic seaboard from Maine to California, with its pitiful little remnant of Indians, fairly represents the aboriginal population of early days, when every mile was either occupied by Indians or used as hunting grounds. And one may say the same of California, with its native population of between two hundred and two hundred and fifty thousand before the beginning of the mission period in the eighteenth century, now reduced to 13,335, including all shades of admixture.

"To say that the Indian population has not suffered seriously from removal from one part of the country to another, with attendant starvation, from dissipation through intoxicants introduced by whites; from wars, with accompanying massacres, which time and again were forced on the Indians because they dared call their souls their own; from epidemics of smallpox, measles, tuberculosis and other diseases, all introduced by civilization—is ridiculous to any one who would care to compare the figures of early observers, and later of Indian Service officials themselves, even if he denied the fact that the aboriginal population of vast regions is now only a memory."





BOBBY.—I am the friend that I always was and will remember only the pleasant things in our relations. Please write as soon as possible, as we are all so anxious about you. M. A. E.

MIRIAM.—We are hoping for your return. Please come home, and we will do all we can to help you, as we are all so anxious about you. Mother, Father, and Nannie.

WALLACE, DONALD.—Please let me know where you are, and come home if possible, as I need you. Frankie.

BETTERS, BETTY.—She lived at 148 Courtland Street, Syracuse, New York, and later went to Rochester, New York. Any one knowing her present address kindly notify Howard F. Knopp, 1122 Admiral Place, Elmira, New York.

OLDRIDGE, HAROLD.—I talked with Mr. Twichell, and he wants you to return to school. If you decide to obtain an education instead of being a laborer, then you are welcome home, but please consider the problem well before you return home. I am so sorry that you love me so little, and that you could leave me as you did. Please let me hear from you. Mother.

EDDIE, L. F.—Please send us your address, so we can send you money to return home. You know that you can't get well away from the family. Everything is O. K., and Helen wants you badly. Your sister, Mrs. E. W. C., Michigan.

PORTLOCK, GLEN RAYMOND.—He disappeared from Martinsville, Indiana, and was supposed to have gone to look for work. No trace of him can be found, and his folks at home are very much worried. Any information regarding him will be extremely appreciated. Mrs. S. B. Portlock, R. B. 7, Newton, Illinois.

DAWSON, JIM and CHARLEY.—Charley worked in Shreveport, Louisiana. Any one knowing their whereabouts will kindly notify their sister, Mrs. G. M., care of this magazine.

MUNNINGS, JOHN.—He attended his sister's funeral in 1916 in Warren, Pennsylvania. His aged parents would like to hear from him or from any one who knows his present address. Mrs. John Munnings, 107 Wetmore Street, Warren, Pennsylvania.

PARKER, ERNEST and FRANCES.—I met them in Boise, Idaho, in the Kozy Kitchen Cafe. Their home was once in Kansas City, Missouri, but were last heard of in 1919 in Utah. They are usually in the lunch room or delicatessen business. They have a daughter named Frances. I would appreciate their present whereabouts. Paul G. Stevens, 870½ Kelly Street, Portland, Oregon.

NORRIS, BILLIE.—He was in Omaha, Nebraska, and married a woman by the name of Anna Johnson. Please write to Sarah Norris Pamwath, R. F. D. 6, Ottumwa, Iowa.

MERRIAM, RALPH.—His home is in Columbus, Ohio. He is six feet in height, has blond hair, blue eyes, a ruddy complexion, and was last seen in 1918, when he was supposed to have joined the navy. Any information will be appreciated by Jack, care of this magazine.

CAMPBELL, FRANCIS.—His home is in Columbus, Ohio, and he is supposed to have joined the navy in 1918. Any one knowing his present whereabouts will confer a favor by writing to Jack, care of this magazine.

WHITE, WALTER P.—He is forty years of age, five feet seven inches in height, has brown hair, blue eyes, and is a carpenter by trade. He left Los Angeles, California, about five years ago, to look for work, and has not been seen since. Please send all information to D. M. White, 778 Wolford Court, Fresno, California.

HUNTSMAN, DOCK.—He lived at Caldwell, Kansas, about thirty-five years ago. He had a friend or a cousin named Bita Bear. Any one knowing his present address will kindly notify Henry Bass, 1416 South Emporia, Wichita, Kansas.

FRED, D. M.—Do you remember an old friend in Hominy Flats? I have been trying to get in touch with you for some time. Please write to me as soon as you see this. S. M., care of this magazine.

ALEMAN, JACK, and PAMPHILY, ROBERT.—They formerly lived at 287 Clinton Street and Pacific Street, Brooklyn, New York. Please communicate with your old pal, Louis, 15 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn, New York.

SULLIVAN, JAMES.—He is fifty years of age, has gray hair and eyes, weighs one hundred and seventy pounds, and is a carpenter by trade. He was in Washington, District of Columbia. Any one knowing his present whereabouts will kindly notify B. F. S., care of this magazine.

HAMMAR, JEFFREY.—Your sister is heartbroken over your disappearance. Please write to her, and she promises to stand by you and keep your address a secret. His present address will be greatly appreciated by Esther Cummings, 384 Forty-fifth Avenue, East, British Columbia.

BLACKIE.—Your mother is now living in Clinton, and is very anxious to hear from you. Please write to her as soon as you can. Hilma.

PARKS, OSCAR R.—He left Shelton, Washington, in 1913, and has not been seen for some time. His mother is very ill and wants him to return home. Any one knowing his present whereabouts will confer a favor by writing to Mrs. Coral Platt, Box 569, Pocatello, Idaho.

EDWARDS, HENRY.—Please send me your address, as Aunt Gussie needs you and does not see the use of living, unless you get in touch with her at once. Please communicate with me, and I will give you the details. Anna Gerwer.

MARKOW, FRED.—He was engaged in some business in Seattle, Washington, several years ago. His brothers are very anxious to get in touch with him and will welcome any information. Arthur Markow, 359 Walker Street, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

O'NEILL, G. H.—All of your letters have been returned. Please write to an old friend, W. V. Burgher, 215 O'Neill Street, West Shokan, New York.

BUDDIE.—Please write me at Spokane, Washington, as I am in great need of you. Blondie.

PARK, J. C.—He disappeared from his home on June 25, 1924, leaving a wife and four children. He is five feet eleven inches in height, forty years of age, has brown hair, blue eyes, and weighs one hundred and sixty-five pounds. Please notify Mrs. J. C. Park, 2213 West Thirteenth Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

BOLINGER, CHARLES E.—He is five feet two inches in height, has light-brown hair, blue eyes, and weighs one hundred and thirty-five pounds. He formerly lived in West Virginia, but later went to Mason, West Virginia. Please send all information to Fred A. Bolinger, 205 Avery Street, Parkersburg, West Virginia.

BOLINGER, FRANK.—He is six feet in height, has light hair, blue eyes, and weighs one hundred and eighty pounds. He was in Lakeside, Nebraska, about six years ago. Kindly notify Fred A. Bolinger, 205 Avery Street, Parkersburg, West Virginia.

WERTBROOK, MANDAM.—He was living in Oregon forty years ago. His sister would like to hear from him, and will appreciate any helpful news. Mrs. Cornelia Johnson, 5602 Grand Avenue, West Duluth, Minnesota.

BERT.—Please write to your wife, Nellie Henry, as she is ill, and has been longing for you ever since you left her.

SHERIDAN, HUGH.—Please get in touch with your friend, who left Scotland two years ago. William MacDonald, care of William Duff, 45 Rushbrook Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

STERNBERG, A. H. A.—He left Stockholm, Sweden, in 1903, for Jamestown, New York, but was last heard of in Rockford, Illinois. His brother is anxious to learn his present whereabouts. Verner A. Swanson, 2907 West Thirty-third Avenue, Denver, Colorado.

ANDERSON, Mrs. C. S.—Her maiden name was Mary M. Lawton. Any one knowing her present whereabouts will kindly notify C. S. A., care of this magazine.

RIBBLE, THOMAS.—Please communicate with Elmo Clark, 2543 West Avenue, 35, Los Angeles, California.

HALLENBEEK, EARL.—She formerly lived in Pennsylvania, and Liberty, New York. Please write to Ethel Hutton, 496 Manhattan Avenue, New York City.

WRIGHT, ROBERT.—He disappeared from Cleveland, Ohio, in 1918. He is fifty years of age, five feet ten inches in height, has blue eyes, and the initials R. W. tattooed on his hand. He is a tool maker by trade. His mother and father are dead, and his children are very eager to hear from him. Charles Sonnenberg, Jackson, Michigan.

ROBERT.—Your father and mother are heartbroken over your absence. Everything is O. K. Please write immediately. Sarah, 142 West Sixteenth Street, Jacksonville, Florida.

CHAPMAN, WILLIAM HARVEY.—He lived with his people in Kansas. Any one knowing his present address will kindly write to W. H. Chapman, Box 531, Victor, Colorado.

JENNINGS, RUSSELL J.—Before enlisting in the army he worked out in a ranch in Wyoming. After the Armistice was signed, he was seen in New York City. An old friend is very eager to find him, and will appreciate any helpful information. Gyp Maloney, care of this magazine.

BOYER, HELEN.—I am frantic over your absence. I have looked for you everywhere, but to no avail. Please return home as soon as possible. Robert C. Boyer, 626 Bloomfield Street, Hoboken, New Jersey.

VOSE, ARCHIE L.—He is forty years of age, five feet seven inches in height, has brown hair, blue eyes and was in Annapolis, Maryland, in October, 1921. Any one knowing his present whereabouts will confer a favor by notifying his niece, Hazel M. Vose, Box 8, West Wardsboro, Vermont.

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Address.....

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