

## COWBOY OR HOME BUILDER ?

THE great Cattle Convention at St. Louis and the exposure of the effort being made by "cattle kings" of Colorado to secure a lease of 3,500,000 acres of the idle lands embraced in the Crow Reservation, have called attention to the immensity of the cattle business. It is estimated that in 1883 the cattle west of the Mississippi River numbered 22,790,800, valued at \$518,575,889. The highest value per head was credited to Iowa—\$27 per head—where only the superior breeds are raised. The same conditions exist in Illinois, Indiana and other States east of the Mississippi whose statistics are not given. Texas is credited with a value of only \$16 per head, owing to the inferior nature of the greater portion of the stock grazing on her almost limitless ranges. The value differs in each section in proportion to the attention which has been paid to improving the breeds. There has been a great increase in numbers and value per head since the above statistics were compiled. It might seem that the renting for grazing purposes of a vast tract of land now held in idleness would be a desirable thing; and so it would—to a few. But the land can be put to better use. Our national domain has limits, as the thousands seeking homesteads in the West are beginning to learn. It will not be many years before there will be no more desirable Government land to be had. In view of this, does it seem judicious, or even just to the people, to permit millions of acres to be thus withheld from the home-seekers and devoted to the enrichment of a few men? In his last report Secretary Teller thus speaks of this reservation: "Since my last report the Indians have been located on the Big Horn. This reservation is much larger than required for their support. The reservation is situated in the Territory of Montana, and contains 7,364 square miles, or 4,713,000 acres of land. At least 3,000,000 acres might be disposed of, leaving the Indians sufficient agricultural lands, to become self-supporting if they desire to become agriculturists, and a sufficient amount of grazing land should they prefer to become stock raisers. The 1,713,000 acres of land that would be left would give nearly, if not quite, 600 acres of land to each individual member of their tribe. The proceeds of the surplus lands, properly used, would make the Crows self-supporting in a few years at the furthest."

What the Government should do in this matter is to extinguish the Indian title to these surplus acres, and throw them open to settlement under the homestead laws only. Where they might furnish grass for vast bands of cattle and employment for a few hundred cowboys, they might, in the other case, give homes to as many thousand families, multiply their value and the value of their products, and increase largely the population of the Territory. In one case the land is made to swell the pockets of a few "cattle kings," and in the other it keeps burning thousands of domestic hearths. There need be no fear that the cattle business will suffer, or that the world will be stinted in its supply of beef. Invasion of the free ranges by settlers may reduce the size of "kingdoms," but not the number of cattle. It will simply increase the

number of owners. There are no vast cattle ranges in Iowa, and yet that State possesses nearly 4,000,000 cattle, all of a superior breed, while Montana has but one-fourth that amount. It is better for the country that one thousand men should own ten cattle each than that ten men should possess a thousand each. Dividing them thus among many owners has a tendency to increase, not only the value per head, but the number of cattle supported by each acre of ground devoted to that purpose. It eliminates, also, that feature of monopoly, and consequent arrogance and oppression, which is becoming so noticeable in the cattle business. Serious complaints are made of the fencing in of public lands, the acquiring of color of title by fraudulent means to thousands of acres of land from which home-seekers are excluded at the muzzle of the rifle, the "freezing out" of settlers and consequent forced sale to the "kings" of their land claims for a nominal sum, and a score of other abuses which naturally follow the aggregation of large capital in the hands of a few men whose interests are not in harmony with the poorer people surrounding them. Not until our Territories are settled by a thrifty class of farmers, their fertile acres tilled, their cattle increased fourfold in numbers and supported upon cultivated grass and cereals, the number of cattle owners increased a thousand fold, and the nomadic cowboy superseded by the home builder, will they enjoy the full measure of prosperity to be derived from supplying hungry humanity with beef.

In the exuberance of his joy at being permitted a taste of the mild climate of the Pacific Coast, our artist gave his fancy rein in our last issue, and drew a picture strongly contrasting the winters of the "Atlantic" and "Pacific." Hardly had the number been distributed and universally praised, when there came a "spell of weather." The young lady in the hammock hastened into the house for her sealskin sacque; the little girl picking flowers had her fingers frost bitten, and the gentleman out driving was compelled to have a pair of runners made for his buggy in order to get home through the snow. He will never do it again. In future the climate must take care of itself. It can expect no more aid from one whom it has so treacherously deserted in the hour of need.

THE people of Southern Oregon are to be congratulated. During the past storm no snow fell in Umpqua or Rogue River valleys, but copious and much-needed rain. Snow lies deep on the mountains, so that the miners will have an abundance of water for a number of months to come. This is a blessing they have not enjoyed for several years, and it will do much to make times better in that region. The crop and fruit outlook is also highly encouraging.

THE December number of the *Decorator and Furnisher* is a most excellent one. This journal, published at No. 32 East Fourteenth street, New York, is invaluable to one who is about to furnish a house, or who would keep posted on the latest artistic designs and novelties in the art of house decoration and furnishing.