

THE COW AND THE COWBOY.

FROM Oregon to Nebraska, and from Montana to Texas, vast stretches of country are devoted exclusively to the grazing of millions of cattle, raised solely as a beef supply for the Eastern markets and packing houses. Wherever are to be found broad expanses of grass-covered plain, valley or hills, unoccupied by the agriculturist or so devoid of natural moisture as to render them practically valueless for cultivation, there may be seen great bands of cattle ranging under the care of the much abused and much misunderstood cowboy. These cattle represent hundreds of millions of dollars, all intrusted to the care of cowboys, upon whose integrity, faithfulness to duty and bravery in times of danger the owners are compelled to rely for the safety of their property. These millions of cattle graze almost unrestrained during the winter, but in the spring they are gathered in, the calves branded, and steers of suitable age selected out to be sent to market. Thus each year the increase is taken care of and the surplus marketed. During the summer cattle on the drive may be seen everywhere, some of them going to market and others being changed from one range to another. In this way the cow and cowboy are constantly shifting from one locality to another. Formerly cattle were driven hundreds of miles to reach a shipping point; but now railroad facilities have so increased that in most regions long drives for that purpose are no longer necessary, and, in consequence, the cattle reach their destination in much better condition. The present season cattle have been sent by rail from Oregon and Washington to Chicago, a distance of more than two thousand miles. It is generally admitted that this journey is too long, and that it is the better plan to send them to the Montana ranges one season, and from there to market the next. In pursuance of this plan nearly fifty thousand have been taken by rail this season, while many large bands are annually driven north from Texas to fatten on the bunch grass ranges of Montana. The bulk of the cattle shipped to and from that Territory are handled by the Northern Pacific Railroad, and this is the leading item of freight traffic. This includes the shipment from the East of thousands of high grade breeding cattle and young cattle for fattening upon the ranges.

For the purpose of handling stock to the best advantage the company has established yards and feeding stations at convenient distances between Wallula and St. Paul. These consist of several large pens, accommodating a thousand cattle, having large water tanks connected with them by means of service pipes. Stock trains unload at these places and lay over a number of hours for rest and refreshment of the cattle with water and feed. By this system stock arrive at their destination in the best possible condition. These yards are located at Horse Plains, Helena, Livingston, Glendive and Mandan. On another page are given views of the yards at Helena and a few characteristic scenes in handling the cattle, as well as the portrait of a typical cowboy.

The idea entertained of the cowboy by the Eastern

public is as erroneous as it is possible to be. The cowboys, as a class, are a brave, intelligent, honorable, kind-hearted and cool-headed class of men. In their ranks will be found college graduates, sons of many of the first families of the East, men worth their thousands in their own right, scions of nobility from Europe and natives of the plains and mountains, the last, of course, by far the most numerous. That their life of freedom from restraint should develop certain wild traits of character, or that among them should drift an occasional refugee from justice is not surprising; but such a recruit must behave himself like a man, and should he commit any outrage or crime his companions would be the first to see that he was properly punished. They have no great love for Indians, nor, for that matter, has any man who has been brought into actual contact with that lazy, pilfering, ignoble race, and if they occasionally have trouble with Mr. Lo, the blame is by no means entirely their own. No better description of them and their characteristics can be given than the following by a cattleman, who has lived and worked with them for years:

"The cowboy is the most thoroughly misunderstood man, outside of the localities where he is known, on the face of the earth. I know him in all his alleged terrors, and as a class there are no nobler-hearted or honorable men in the world. Brave to rashness and generous to a fault, if you should be thrown among them you would find them ever ready to share their last crust with you, or lie down at night with you on the same blanket. Say that I have ten thousand cattle which I am about to send overland from Texas into Montana to fatten for the market. Those cattle will be on the drive from the first of April until the middle of September. They are divided into three herds, with a dozen or sixteen men with each herd. I intrust those cattle in the hands of a gang of cowboys. For six months I know absolutely nothing of my stock. I trust their honesty to the extent of many thousands of dollars without a contract, without a bond, with no earthly hold upon them, legally or morally, beyond the fact that I am paying them \$35 or \$40 a month to protect my interests. And these are the men pictured in the East as outcasts of civilization! I trust absolutely to their judgment in getting those cattle through a wild and unbroken country without loss or injury. I trust as absolutely to their bravery and endurance in the face of danger, for a man to be a cowboy must be a brave man. For instance, we are on a drive. The cattle are as wild as deers naturally, and being in an unknown country are as nervous and timid as sheep. The slightest noise may startle them into a stampede. We have been on the drive all day and night is coming on. It is cold and raining. We have reached the point where we intend to round up for the night. The men commence to ride around the drove, singing, shouting and whistling to encourage the animals by the sounds they are familiar with and to drown any noise of an unusual character which might provoke a stampede. Round and round the cattle they ride until the whole drove is traveling in a circle. Slowly the cowboys close in on them, still shouting and