

THE JUDGMENT OF THE AGES.

IN an atmosphere of smoke, and the crash of steel, and intermittent flashes of lightning, a wheel, huge flanged and irresistible in force, revolves in the realm of the ages. It is covered with blood and the fragments of the lives it has crushed, and there is blackness and iron wherever it has come. It grinds out men's hearts, crushing some with quick fury; others it attracts with magnetic power, carries in its heart awhile, till, giddy with the speed and the roar, benumbed and exhausted, they fall underneath and are torn to pieces.

And that wheel is the Spirit of the Time that Is.

In a haze of soft and mellow-hued sunset, amidst the hum of bees, the song of the troubadour and the whispering of the wind among the vine-leaves, a wheel of rainbow colors and much adorned with florid ornaments went lightly echoing through the vaults of Time. Its path was strewn with flowers, rich in color and perfume; in its wake danced young men and maidens, richly clad, making music the expression of their gladness. And the spokes of the wheel were Art, and Love and Contentment; and as the wheel revolved their color and tone lent grace and light to the earth.

And that was the Spirit of the Middle Ages.

In a hard, gemlike light of pure whiteness, amidst the pure outlines of white marble and naked gods, under canopies of laurel and bay leaves, spun a wheel of primitive simplicity of form and strength, rolling proudly to the tuneful notes of the lyre. Its swath was wide and glorious; the hum of spears behind it was not so loud as the murmur of scholiasts, and the pure beginnings of Art, and Philosophy, and Religion.

That was the Spirit of the Classic Ages.

* * * * *

Into the vaults of the Infinite, where abide the Spirits of Things and Abstractions, rolled, with lightning flash and horrible roar, the Spirit of the Time that Is.

Then gave the three account of their works. And the Spirits of the Dead, in the halls beyond, gave witness.

Then spake the Voice of the Ruler of all Time—

"Oh, Spirit of the Time that but now Was, thou hast made thy path a battle field, thy wake a burial ground. Thou hast made life a fight, where thy fore-runners left it a blessing. Thou hast stifled the souls of men that were developed for thee; thou hast erased their hearts with steel and iron. And Art thou hast killed. Therefore shall thy name be expunged from the rolls of Time. The spirit of thy Spirit shall fade, and the former Spirits whom thou hast rooted out, shall prevail. For the last shall be first."

And the Spirits of the Dead rejoiced.

J. PERCY POLLARD.

BRANDING CALVES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

THE scene depicted in the illustration on our first page is one of weekly occurrence on nearly every ranch and cattle farm in the northwest territories of British Columbia. As spring draws near and the light begins to visit the earth earlier in the morning than it has during the long, dreary winter, the riders muster up in front of camp, and, dividing into two bands (generally three or four in each), set out to run in the animals that are henceforth destined to bear on their bodies the designation that sets them down as some rancher's private property. A smart ride of about five miles brings the horsemen to the band of bullocks, or horses, as the case may be, and as many as are wanted are at once headed off toward two thin lines of fencing that stretch out like a pair of arms—radii of a circle—having their central point at the camp, where they meet and form a square paddock. Into this snare the animals rush, not perceiving the trap until they find the rails gradually narrowing in on them.

As soon as the herd reaches the square, the slip rails are drawn down, and the enraged beasts discover too late that they are caught. For several hours they are left to themselves, for, in their condition directly after capture, it would be worth a man's life to venture too close. When evening draws on, a branding iron and heating utensils are taken to the rails and prepared for the operation, the iron being made nearly red hot. Then seizing hold of the handle, about twelve or fifteen feet in length, two men thrust it in through the rails, and, singling out a beast, dash it against his side, and hastily withdraw it again. The animal, frantic with the temporary pain, throws itself wildly against the fence, often attempting, in its fury, to jump the ten-foot rails by which it is surrounded. This latter act very often causes the death of some fine horse or bullock, impaling it on top of the sharp-pointed posts and ripping it open terribly.

Our illustration, however, shows the manner in which calves and sheep are branded—an operation fraught with less danger both to man and beast, but entailing considerably more trouble. First, the legs have to be tied with rope—an operation far more difficult than it looks on paper, and generally requiring the aid of three able-bodied men to bring to a successful issue. Then the calf must be firmly held while the branding iron is pressed against its side.

JNO. R. RATHOM.

Preparations are being made on a grand scale for the Spokane Falls exposition. Plans have been adopted for a building with nearly 200,000 square feet of floor space. An elegant prospectus is now in press.