

Woodhouse felt he was very pale, and yet he thought he had hardiesse in his character.

Once more the sheeny sun-light flooded the vast prairie, whilst here and there he saw low one-roomed cottages standing out on their claims, with the patch of corn-land close by, a would-be peach orchard now and again showing itself as an isolated sign of civilization.

"Do you see," said Kirwan, "that brown speck in the distance yonder?"

Woodhouse looked in the direction he pointed too with his whip, and there sure enough as the distance lessened he made out the Rancher's home.

His heart sank below zero. Had he travelled so many miles for this—to stay in this cottage? Why, his father's groom in Old England would have scorned such a shanty as this Kansas ranche. He had no such cottage on his place. And yet Charley Kirwan, the rich rancher, lived here.

On and on trotted the horses, nearer and nearer he drew to his fate. In a scope of hundreds of miles the only man he knew was Charley Kirwan.

He looked ruefully at his trunk full of books and European luxuries. What good could they be in such a cottage as this?

And yet the memory of his books consoled him, and the sight of a great purple sunset glory flooding and making beautiful the outside of the ranche reconciled him to his fate, for he dearly loved æsthetics.

There was a kind of romance, too, in the situation, and after all he would try it.