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## The Race with a Stampede

By Max. McD.

T WAS dark and no mistake. The round-up was on the foot-hills of the Canadian Rockies and the prairie as far east as Stand Off and Slide Out had been thoroughly ridden and the beef gathered. We were holding a big herd of steers for a week, getting ready to ship at Peigan Siding, and it was a lazy enough life except the night work. We were camped at Long Bottom on the Kootenay where there was plenty of grass to graze the bunch in the daytime and water where two thousand head could drink at once and never one bog or give any trouble. Two men on "day herd" at a time could handle them easily enough, and as there were nine of us, or enough for three guard; of three men each, we didn't have anything much to complain of.

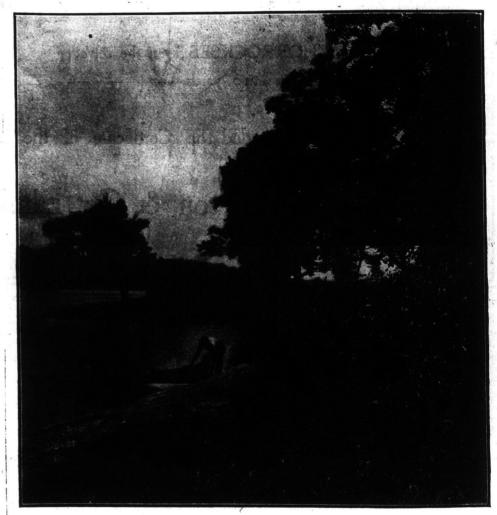
Old Morton was on the "chuck wagon," and, as the Cochrane Ranch Company was putting up the "grub stake," there was nothing lacking in stuff to eat. Morton built pies and puddings that were never excelled anywhere, and have been well grazed and watered that

the boys to be careful, and if it rained and the herd drifted to try and keep them pointed toward the bottom if possible for fear of some of them beating back to the Stand Off range and losing them.

As we rode back to camp we both agreed that the very first clap of thunder near at hand would send the whole herd flying, and that if it rained, it would be very hard to hold them. He told all hands not to picket their night horses, but to tie them up to the "chuck wagon" all ready for instant use.

Perhaps I should explain a little about this business, so that my readers may understand what a "bed ground" is, and how the boys stand guard.

At sunset the day herders work the herd up toward camp slowly, and as the leaders feed along to about three or four yards from camp, one of the boys rides out in front and stops them until the whole herd gradually draws together in a compact body. If they



A September snap-shot in the Rainy River District.

occasionally he'd have a plum duff for | day they will soon begin to lie down, supper that simply exhausted the culinary art.

The steers were mud fat as the boys say, and were easily satisfied with grass and water long before time for bedding down. Most every night they would take a little run, and it usually took all hands an hour or so to get them back to the bed ground and quieted down, which didn't tend to make us any better natured when the cook yelled: "Roll out! Roll out!" at, four o'clock every morning.

It was the month of October and the weather had been fine ever since we started in, but this morning it clouded over and in the west toward sunset, great black clouds crept down the peaks of the Rockies, and overhead little de-tached patches had gone scudding across the sky, although below on the prairie, not a breath of air was stirring. The roar of thunder seemed to be tearing the forest from its native roots, and occasionally a flame of lightning would dart down the mountain side through the rapidly darkening sky.

At eight o'clock, when the first nightherd went out to take the bunch for the first three hours' watch, it was almost black dark. "Alkali Pete," the boss of the outfit, came out with them and

and in an hour probably nine-tenths of them will be quietly lying and chewing their cuds. All this time the cow-boys are slowly riding around them, each man riding alone, and in opposite directions, so that they meet twice in each circuit. If any adventurous steer should attempt to graze off, he is sure to be seen and driven back into the herd.

The place where the cattle are held at night is called the "bed ground," and it is the duty of the day herders, who have cared for them all day, to have them on to the bed ground and bedded down before dark, when the first guard comes out and takes them off their hands.

Well, as I said at the beginning, it was dark, and although it was not raining when they left camp, t'e boys had put on their slickers, or oil-skin coats, well knowing that they would have no time to do it when the rain began to fall.

The three men on first guard were typical Texas boys, raised in the saddle. insensible to hardship and exposure, and the hardiest and most reckless riders in the outfit. One of them named "Shorty' Holder, was a great singer, and usually sang all the time he was in guard. It's always a good thing, especially on a dark night, for somehow it seems to reasked us how the cattle acted, and told assure and quiet cattle to hear the hu-