

"Come in and have coffee, corn bread, and pork, then we can start for the upper ranche."

Uproariously they chatted whilst the meal was in preparation under their eyes, and then doing full justice to it, the cavalcade started for a few miles ride, mostly over the edge of the great prairie, here and there dotted with a tiny ranche. By degrees the ranches became fewer, the cultivation less, and then the broad expanse in all its vastness burst upon their eyes. Rich luxuriant vegetation indeed; over this vast stretch Kirwan's cattle ranged for miles, watched by the ranche boys, and at night were driven home to their carels.\*

This upper ranche was built in a more picturesque manner than the lower one. It had a wooden portico and garden behind, though only one room. Great white-hearted cabbages grew here in the garden, which they ate raw with salt, and which also served for making into sour kraut. The stables and outhouses were nearer the ranche than in the lower one, and the carel built close by, so that if cattle stealers came near in the night, the dogs' barking could easily be heard by the men in charge. It was late when they arrived, and the strangers went directly off to see the herd; beautifully fat and sleek they looked, feeding in their large groups, as they were driven gently home for the night.

The bargain was struck there, and the calf separation from the cows was to begin early in the morning.

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\* Carel, an enclosure in which cattle are penned for the night.