

sary to keep guard over them during the night. There are generally three or four shifts. The men on duty ride slowly around the herd, singing or whistling. No matter how poor the singing may be, it seems to soothe and quiet the cattle. But if the least sudden sound, such as the stumbling of a horse, or the howl of a coyote, startles them, they instantly stampede. The cowboys ride swiftly up to the leaders, and by continually heading them off they try to "mill" them, that is to get them running in a circle. Should a horse by any mishap fall before that mad rush, in a few moments its rider would be trampled to death. Sometimes they are successful in keeping them together, but very often the cattle scatter, and the work of rounding them up must be done over again. If all goes well, on the next day branding takes place. The irons are shaped like the letter J, and are held to the place to be branded until the flesh is seared. The ownership of the calf is determined by the brand on the cow it follows. If one finds an unbranded yearling calf in his ranch, even if he knows it belongs to another, he has the right to put his own brand and earmark on it. Such calves are called "mavericks."

When a buyer comes along and decides to make a purchase the whole herd is collected, and he takes his pick of them. A cowboy then "cuts out"—to use their term—the animals selected. This is one of the operations in which the wiriness and training of the western bronco is brought into evidence. The cowboy works his way among the herd and drives out a beast. This is not done without a struggle, but the bronco nimbly follows every move of the cow, often turning so suddenly and with such a lurch that the spur of the rider touches the ground. When the whole purchase is "cut out" the cattle must be driven to town. The "chuck" wagon, or wagon for grub, bedding, etc., is then got ready and the herd, surrounded by cowboys moves slowly on its way. Driving herds is often made difficult and disagreeable by the sandstorms that prevail in the country, blinding cattle and cowboys. At night-fall a guard is placed over the cattle and the drivers having supped on "sody" biscuits, coffee *sine lacte*, and beef in some form, retire to that blissful, peaceful slumber induced by healthful exercise.