

So soon after that sunset it was night. No long gloaming as in England. The lamp was lit, and the blinds drawn down, and with appetites only such as prairie air could create, they did full justice to the plenteous fare. Slice after slice of luscious hot corn bread disappeared, cup after cup of coffee.

Charley Kirwan in his quiet way had drawn out the conversation with the boys who sat with them on their work on the farm, and about the cattle; and Woodhouse, interested by the very strangeness of the scene, entered into it with his whole heart.

He had no idea how time flew until they pulled out their watches, and Charley Kirwan laughed that still laugh of his as he asked his guest to pull round by the fire and smoke, as every one in the ranche would be moving early next morning.

"Breakfast at 6.30 or 7. We are up soon after four, you know."

Then they made the beds. Those precious sheets were pulled out of the box, to the amusement of the two boys, who vowed it was the funniest move possible.

"And how are we to make the bed, Charley?" they asked. (Here all distinction between master and servant was at an end.) "How do these things go?"

How they laughed; and how quickly that dreaded first evening had flown; so pleasantly too, that the stranger regretted it had come to an end.

On that first evening he too thought his trunk out of place in the Rancher's home, as he took from it those necessities he required.