

imagination—which caused her increasing anxiety with every day's delay.

The scene was enlivened by the sheep, cattle, and horses which, singly or in groups, dotted the plain, and the flocks of wild fowl which hovered about the lake or disported themselves on its glassy surface; while the silence was broken by the tapping of the busy workmen's hammers as they worked at the fence, and the murmuring of the now scanty stream as it dropped over the fall into its rocky basin.

Connie was looking dreamily at the snow-clad summits of the distant Sierras, when a mingled sound of shouting and bellowing in the distance caught her ear, and then she noticed a great commotion amongst the cattle Harry was herding near the further extremity of the prairie. The boy was "rounding them up" on his fleet mustang, and apparently trying to head them towards home.

What could be the matter? wondered Connie, as she watched the strange proceedings. It still wanted more than an hour to sunset, and it was the usual custom to let the cattle return leisurely towards the house, grazing as they came; now, however, they were being rounded into a compact body and urged along at a gallop.

Connie began to feel alarmed. Her eyes searched the surrounding country for some clue to the mystery, but for a long time they searched in vain, until at