

were referred to Charley, who was the President of this little Republic. Sometimes the breakfast would be later, for the men had orders to go and feed the cattle first, Charley Kirwan being a cattle rancher. As he said he placed a horse for riding at the disposal of his guest, who, with books, exploring the country round, long walks and conversations with his host, found those first days full of excitement and all too short. Kirwan was a man of the world whose experience was both large and varied. Born not far from the triple cities of New York, Brooklyn and Jersey; at an age when most boys are still at school, he had started in life on his own account, and refused all help, but his own, to forward himself in life.

Whatever he took in hand seemed to prosper. Finally he entered into partnership with a lawyer in Chicago, and finding he had made money enough went West, and bought several claims for cattle farming (each claim contains 150 acres). Buying four bulls from Kentucky's famous herds, and some hundred of Texas cows, he started a strain of cattle famed in that western district. Charley, travelling in Europe, had left the care of his farms and cattle until recently to his younger brother, Henry, who a few months before this story opened had succumbed to that deleterious enemy prairie fever, or ague, caught mostly from turning the virgin soil whilst following the plough. The soil being so rich, emits gases which poison the system. At least this is the prairie theory. Quinine is the great antidote.