

brightest. The lower levels or sloughs are purple fields of shooting-stars, while on higher ground appear many families of the legume clan displaying their bright livery of purple or blue. Most numerous of all in tribal divisions, the compositae dot the landscape, their favourite colour yellow. An early wild rose here and there is beginning to mark the trails, for the western wild rose is a most sociable flower and loves to line up along the roads in brightest holiday attire to watch the passers-by.

Along one of these trails two horsemen are passing, evidently making their way towards the only habitation in sight, a low rambling structure, which being but one storey high is designated a shack. Their general appearance is quite picturesque, though hardly to be styled elegant. One wears a regulation cowboy hat, an English shooting jacket rather the worse for wear, a pair of buckskin trousers very wide in the seat and very narrow at the knees, below which they enter a pair of top boots unpolished from the first day of service; to these are fastened a pair of Mexican spurs, the rowels of which are about four inches in diameter, and the spikes an inch and a half long. His companion wears what must once have been a broad-brim felt, now shapeless and beyond definition in colour. To permit vision the forepart of the brim has been pinned to the crown by a horse-blanket safety-pin, six inches long. A fancy woolen shirt, open at the throat, serves for upper garment; a revolver and cartridge belt, not supplied with either at present, girds his waist and serves to uphold a pair of ready-made trousers, strengthened with copper rivets at the vital points. Over the trousers is a pair of schaps, or leather overalls, with leather fringes down the outer seams. The large Mexican or stock saddles, which half cover their broncos, harmonize well enough with the costumes of the riders, and altogether there is a picturesque, unpremeditated look about their outfit which is quite interesting.

As to whether any of his friends in England would have recognized in the first rider the ardent emigrant, Percy Briggs, is perhaps doubtful, and still more doubtful is it that any of the second rider's friends would have recognized in him Harry Benson, the former school friend of Percy and first cause of his coming west.

While they are putting up their horses a word or two of explanation must be given to bring them up to date.

Percy had arrived in Alberta with a characteristically complete English outfit of implements of the chase, including the latest hunting and colonial costumes, and was immediately installed as a ranching pupil in the household of the ex-metropolitan lawyer of aristocratic family and decayed fortunes.

The household embraced the gentleman's wife, two daughters, and another pupil also entering that year. There were five daughters originally, but three of them had, after one or two unmatured engagements, fallen to the lot of former pupils. Percy soon found that his tutor's herd being very limited the study of ranching would not of necessity require all his time. As the gentleman explained it, the study of ranching was a qualitative, not a quantitative matter, and one cow properly utilized was of more importance than a herd of fifty superficially studied. To Percy the reasoning was quite conclusive. He soon discovered his friend Benson, now settled on a ranch of his own, and through him made many other friends for whom Calgary was a common rendezvous. By these he was gradually initiated into the mysteries of western life in all its wildness and woolliness. As an aside it may be remarked that the desire to make a novel and interesting impression on new-comers will account for the greater part of that same wildness and woolliness which is supposed to be the necessary result of western conditions.

To remove Percy's initial scruples he was assured that it was essential to success in a new country to first of all make oneself thoroughly familiar with the social atmosphere and customs of the country. This, too, seemed eminently reasonable. But the time needed to obtain this indispensable familiarity proved to be very considerable, for ere long he was spending two weeks in town to one on the ranch, until the shooting season opened, when that sport occupied his spare time and gave him infinite delight. True, his instructor in his official capacity had remonstrated with him in an academic sort of way, but his own example belied his precepts.

Following the natural course of his predecessors in a country where women are not very plentiful, Percy fell madly in love with one of his instructor's daughters, and before his year was up had added another handsome specimen to her already valuable collection of engagement rings. But one must sacrifice the details and get on, otherwise this simple sketch will be in danger of expanding into a three volume romance.

His year of apprenticeship closed, and his parents encouraged by the most satisfactory reports, Percy arranged for a sort of partnership with his father in order to undertake ranching on a respectable scale. The father was to supply the funds and hold a general claim on the ranch and stock, while the son supplied the experience and management. What was described as an improved and partially stocked ranch was purchased from one of Percy's friends, or rather from his friend's creditors. The friend, in spite of a very intimate knowledge of the social atmosphere and distinctive customs of the country,