

literally translated is "The-creek-where-the-white-man-mended-the-cart-with-a-moose-jaw-bone." The country hereabouts is very beautiful and fertile. A young farmer told me that last year he sold 17,000 bushels of wheat. He intends going to Ontario to look for a wife next winter.

Leaving Moose Jaw, we pass through the Old Wives' Lakes, which are entirely alkaline, having no outlets. In all directions the green-swathed prairies are scarred with myriad trails and round wallows where the buffaloes took mud baths to free themselves from vermin. Buffalo bones have a monetary value now, and piles of them ready for shipment to the East have been photographed.

As it lies shimmering and throbbing in the unscreened sun, vast tracts of the land appear to be almost barren, but it is especially adapted for sheep ranching, and enormous flocks of these woolly idiots, with their knock-kneed lambs, spread themselves over the plains. The life of a sheep-herder is a lonely one. He often goes insane through melancholy. The cow-punchers hold that no man can be decent and be a sheep-walker. He is considered a low-down, miserable being, only fit to kill.

Passing through this district there is no monotony. Every moment is replete with curious sights. Medicine Hat is a wide-awake place, and the centre of the magnificent ranching country known as "the Banana Belt," because of the Chinook winds that soften the "Northers" with their mysterious, penetrating cold. This is the land of the cowboy, the land where the throne is the saddle, the land *par excellence* of beef and freedom. The drawback of the ranching lands—there was only one Garden of Eden—lies in the scanty water supply, but at Medicine Hat the plains are well watered. Only one per cent. of the cattle died last winter in this district.

The cowboy is not necessarily an uncouth freak dressed in the border garb we are accustomed to in lurid literature and pictures. In other days, we used to think of him as a daring, wild personage, riding madly over the prairies with long hair flying behind,

and a murderous revolver sticking out of his belt. On the contrary his dress is rather common-place. He has a fine indifference to appearance, and change of fashion does not affect his apparel. His heavy felt hat is admirably adapted to repel the rays of the sun, and it is said that there is no recorded case of sunstroke on the ranges in the Territories. His gloves are buckskin, his shirt woollen, and he is totally unacquainted with those inventions of the devil—starched collars.

Nor does he ride furiously. He goes along with a choppy, steady gait that would tire the life out of an Easterner to follow. Attached to his wrist with a thong, the cowman carries a quirt, which is a short, heavy whip, with a stock about a foot long, and with a lash made of four loose heavy thongs. The stock is a wooden stick, covered with braided leather. It has a "loaded head," and the cowman knows just the touch that will fell a charging steer or a mad pony. To use his own term, he "quirts the bronch' a-plenty." The broncho is all horse colors, but more often buckskin, and sometimes piebald.

Ranching is becoming yearly more and more a farming operation. The range is often under fence, and the cowboy must ride the line to see that the fence is not down at any point. He raises a certain amount of hay for winter feed, and a bit of grain for his horses. He is not a general terror, full of strange oaths; but, on the contrary, is a quiet, faithful, hard-working man. Sometimes his wife will live with him on the ranch, but as a usual thing, he "bachs it." His shack is usually a long, low one, of a single storey. Or it may be a "dug-out," sod-roofed, thatch-roofed, mud-roofed, roofed anyhow. He has no near neighbors, so does not require sash curtains. Indeed, his house has no room for curtains, women, or pianos.

From its geographical position, Calgary will one day become a thriving city. Situated on a hill-girt plateau, it is the chief source of supplies for the mining districts in the mountains beyond, and is the centre of the trade of the northern part of the ranching country.