



FOR the last twenty years our cow-boy population has been falling off at the rate of a thousand a year; in fact, there are only about 8000 real rope-throwing bronco-busters left. In the East it costs two dollars a seat to see these fellows perform. But, after all, that's a good deal less than the fare would be to their native habitat, whence they used to write letters like this in their spare time: "Dear sur, we have brand 800 calves this roundup we have made sum hay potatoes is a fine crop. That Englishman you left in charge at the other camp got too fresh and we had to shoot him. Nothing much has happened sence you left. Yurs truely, Jim."

YOU can't blame the horse—there are times when you've got to scratch. But it's a point in favor of the automobile. Branding the colts would make them nervous, too. That was a quick process for the cow-boy—catching the colt, throwing him with his lasso, and clapping on the hot irons; one could do a dozen and a half young horses in an hour. After that, with only a little care lest the worms get in, the wound would be healed and peeled in fifteen days. Some horses liked their own ranches so much they didn't need a brand—they would come back from a distance of two hundred miles.

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COW-BOYS hated women—we were told. But those frontier town dances indicate some interest. The dances had to begin before dark, so that ranchers living far in the country could see the trails; and, for the same reason, they lasted till dawn. A lady had to be careful, for any careless coquetry might result in the shooting of a man: though, on the other hand, she never need fear to lose a partner, as there were always about ten men to one woman. In one hard cow-town in the early days eleven men were shot in one day.

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RIDING the steers was the fun of the round-up, but branding the calves was the work. The old round-ups would bring together perhaps 300 men, but now not more than thirty are needed. That broad-brimmed hat cow-boys enjoy so used to cost \$20—with the best sort of hatband of rattlesnake-skin. Clothes meant much to the real cow-boy, whether such luxuries as long-fringed buckskin gloves or the high-heeled narrow boots, so tight he could hardly walk in them. But, of course, he seldom walked.

We Prefer to

MISS VERA MCGINNIS (champion all-round cow-girl) belongs to the universal suffrage era; for the old cow-boys never tried such airy feats. Riding meant getting places to them first of all—how ever much they might pride themselves on their riding genius. They could steer their pony through a herd of frenzied steers to find a calf; they could ride until their horse dropped with weariness; and they could ride, as one man did, sixty miles for a doctor with a leg broken half way below the knee and the bone protruding.



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SOME young men coming West for "experience" became discouraged yet when they saw the average salary of a cow-boy, and that was for a six months' term. Men usually began this career in their early twenties, were then settled down to quiet jobs, such as looking out for the mail.

