

COLORADO LETTER.

Special Correspondence.

CANON CITY, COL., Nov. 20, 1882.

The country about Canon City is largely devoted to grazing. In fact, stock raising, or "herding," is the great industry for this whole region from Texas to a point considerably north of the Union Pacific Railway, excepting the comparatively narrow limits within which mining interests are confined. In New Mexico, in southern Colorado, on the Arkansas and its tributaries—the Fountain, the St. Charles, the Muddy, the Cucharas, the Huercano, and others—in the great park over across the range, and over the plains in Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming, the herds roam and the rancheros ride. The progress of settlement and the advance of civilization has encroached somewhat upon what was formerly the domain of the ranchmen, especially in Nebraska and northern Colorado; but, in general terms, he largely covers the territory outlined above. Between Denver and Julesburg, on the Union Pacific Railroad, lay the immense range of the late John Hiff, one side of which was fifty miles in length, and which was in all respects the most extensive ranch in Colorado. He is said to have begun on a capital of \$100, and when he died four years ago his estate was valued at \$1,500,000.

Probably, all things considered, southern Colorado possesses greater advantages for herding than can be combined in any part of the region devoted to that industry. It is traversed by railroads, and accessible from all sides, while the climate is most salubrious and so mild in winter that stock roam and graze without shelter or feeding. Barren as those sandy plains appear, the coarse, dry-looking tufts of "buffalo grass" furnish nutriment upon which cattle thrive and fatten beyond belief. To some there is a sentimental drawback in the absence of the "everlasting hills," but that soon becomes to be a small matter when the other advantages of this locality are considered. No doubt in other regions land can be had more cheaply, but there are counterbalancing disadvantages. Above a certain latitude, notably in Wyoming, great losses have occurred from severe winters, and not very far to the north the "Lo family" come in to disturb and molest. Speaking of hard winters, they had one in Colorado two years ago which, according to all accounts, takes the cake, and was the cause of heavy losses to cattle men. In some parts of the State hay sold at \$300 per ton. But seasons like this are few and far between.

Of the profits of ranching I shall not undertake, for lack of space, to give any complete estimates, though several that are full and reliable have been furnished me. After allowing for all contingencies it may be safely put down as more certain in its results than mining, and more remunerative for the capital and labor invested than the best mercantile business I know of in the East. To engage in it successfully requires, capital, a knowledge of the business, sound judgment and a willingness to endure the privations and loneliness of the life it entails. Any man with these prerequisites can certainly double an investment of \$10,000 or \$20,000 in five years, with a strong probability of doing much better even than that. I am told of a case where some gentlemen about ten years ago made up the sum of \$7,000 for the purchase of cattle and put the herd in the hands of a practical man. It was, of course, when cattle were considerably cheaper than they are now, and they did not buy much land but sent their herd to range at a distance; but these men have some time since withdrawn their original investment and are now offered \$125,000 for what they now hold, after having allowed their manager one-quarter for his services. This may hardly be considered an average example, but it is one case of many, and a fair illustration of the possibilities of the business. Where else in the world and in what other known way can a man sit and see his possessions increase before his eyes with so little exertion on his part?

Only those who have seen the life of a ranchman as it is can have a correct idea of the fascination it possesses. To ride over the range and see the vast herds of cattle—the splendid bulls, the plump steers, the red, and white, and roan, and

mottled cows—grazing contentedly from dawn until near noon when they all take their accustomed trail and seek the water with unerring certainty, is a study of more interest than might be imagined. One may meet engaged in this occupation, or sitting in the doorways of hotels here in the evenings, surrounded by "honest miners" in overalls, gentlemen accustomed to the resources and habits of the most refined civilization. No one's felt hats have broader brims, no one's flannel shirts are rustier, and no one's boots more thoroughly covered with adobe dust; and every one will tell you he is as happy as a king. It may occur to more than one young man, conscious of the drawbacks of a business life in our cities, with its fierce competition and unavoidable risks, that life on the plains might give him ample occupation, comfortable gains and a sound mind and body. And another class to whom this life might appeal with great force, comprise those unfortunate who seek Akien and Florida every winter and "come home with the strawberries" in the spring.

One of the most exciting events on the ranch is the "round up" which occurs in June and July and September each year. During the year the herds intermingle and stray from ranch to ranch, and at certain seasons they must be collected and separated. They are distinguished by brands which are conclusive and universally accepted evidence of ownership. For each district a master or director of the "round up" is chosen whose orders implicitly obeyed by the force of from 20 to 50 men furnished by the ranch owner's according to their holdings. They have two or three horses apiece, with coaks, etc., and starting from a given point take a regular course, camping out at night. They thus sweep the range with the skill coming from long practice and gather the cattle together, when they are separated by the brands. To witness this process and the exploits of the skillful drivers, whose trained horses "turn on a five cent piece," is a most interesting sight. There are some sheep about here, but sheep-herding has been mostly driven further south by the antagonism between sheep and cattle men, of which I may give you some facts hereafter. DON PEDRO.

We publish elsewhere the prospectus of the above paper. It is a newspaper so long established and so largely circulated in Michigan and the Northwest, that its own excellence and enterprise is its best commendation. Its news department is always extensive and complete; its editorial pages abreast of the events of the day; while its state news and commercial reports are full and accurate; and while all its editions are improving in all their departments, we notice the publishers have reduced the price of the Weekly Post and Tribune to \$1.00 per year. It will be clubbed with this paper at the above price. If you give it a trial, you cannot make a mistake.

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Territorial Changes.
The following item will be of interest as showing the successive changes in the government of the State and the various divisions of this northwestern territory: "Timber Woods, of Steamboat Rock, the pioneer lawyer of Iowa, built a house near Burlington, Ia., which has a queer history. At this house one of the children was born in the territory of Michigan. The next child born in the selfsame cabin was a native of Wisconsin, and the third was in the territory of Iowa."

Precision in Business Matters.
How many misunderstandings arise from the loose way in which business matters are talked over, and then, when each party puts his own construction on the conversation, the matter is dismissed by each with the words, "all right, all right." Frequently it turns out all wrong, and becomes a question for lawyers and the courts. More than three-fourths of the litigation of the country would be saved, if people would put their agreements in writing and sign their names to them. Each word in our language has its own particular meaning, and memory may, by the change of its position in a sentence, convey an entirely different idea from that intended. When once reduced to writing, ideas are fixed, and expensive law suits avoided.

European Railways.
According to French official statistics the total length of working railways in Europe, which on Dec. 31, 1880, was 168,419 kilometers, amounted on Dec. 31, 1881, to 172,372 kilometers; the total increase in 1881 being thus 3,953 kilometers, or 2.35 per cent. of the extent worked in the end of 1880. France shows the greatest increase—viz., 1,411 kilometers or 38.45 per cent. in the total increase. Looking at the absolute development of the system of each country, without taking into account the proportion relatively to the surface, it appears that the European states rank as follows, with regard to importance of railway system: Germany 34,314 kilometers; Great Britain and Ireland, 29,232 kilometers; France, 27,585 kilometers; Russia and Finland, 23,529 kilometers; Austria-Hungary, 19,126 kilometers. Then follow in order, but with railway systems, the most important of which is under 10,000 kilometers—Italy, Spain, Sweden and Norway, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, Switzerland, Denmark, Roumania, Turkey, Bulgaria and Roumelia, Portugal, and lastly Greece, which has only 10 kilometers of railway.

Near Sightedness.
Where acquired near sightedness exists it may have begun to make its appearance in early life, perhaps almost as soon as the child was set at his books. Unless it appears before the age of sixteen it is not likely to appear at all. But a great many who think their eyes perfect—and, indeed, really have perfect eyes in comparison with those more grievously afflicted—are really more or less myopic. Not only is the vision of a majority of men and women defective in one respect or another, but it has been established beyond reasonable doubt that in all highly civilized communities myopia is developed in at least sixty, and perhaps seventy, per cent. of the pupils who reach the highest grades or go through the last years of school attendance. The disease, it clearly appears, is progressive. The eye gradually elongates, or is otherwise altered in structure or form, reaching in most instances a constant point of misshapement, when the near sightedness becomes fixed, but in some cases continuing to get out of order through all the years of book-study, until the twentieth or twenty-fifth year, or even almost until the close of life. In most near sighted persons the acuteness as well as the extent of vision is impaired, and in the worst cases of progressive short sight the retina suffers serious damage, or absolute blindness supervenes. Proper glasses may enable short sighted persons to see comfortably, but they are always voted by their wearers a nuisance, and they do not restore diseased eyes to health, or prevent them, under certain circumstances from becoming more and more unsound.

What Railroad Trains Are Worth.
But few persons as they see one of the fast express trains go by are aware of the value of such a train. What is known as the Royal Limited Express over the Pennsylvania road, as the train is ordinarily made up, represents over \$120,000, as follows: Engine, \$12,000; baggage car, \$1,200; smoking car, \$5,000; dining-room car, \$12,000; five elegant Pullman cars, \$18,000 each, \$90,000. While this may seem to be an exception, the ordinary express trains represent \$83,000 to \$85,000. The engine and tender, which are considered together, valued \$10,500; the baggage car, \$1,000; the postal car, \$2,000; the smoking car, \$5,000; the two ordinary passenger cars, \$10,000 each; and three palace cars, \$15,000 each—total, \$83,000. The palace cars put down at \$15,000 are in many cases worth \$18,000, and some Pullman cars are now run that cost in the neighborhood of \$30,000. It is stated that the average value of a freight train is still greater than a passenger train when the rolling stock and value of property are included. Some of the freight of one of these through trains aggregates in value \$250,000 to \$300,000, and what is a little singular is the fact that the trains moving westward are more valuable than those moving eastward—a large per cent of the westbound business is merchandise of valuable machinery, while nearly 75 per cent of the eastbound business is grain, which is carried in a car costing \$450, and the property carried will average \$400 per car, so that the entire train of twenty-five cars, engine included, are not worth over \$34,000 to \$35,000, while frequently one car load of merchandise coming west will represent that value, and these palaces on wheels, carrying thousands of passengers and thousands of freight cars carrying millions of valuable property, are dependent for safety upon one man—the engineer. There are other men—the conductor, baggage-master, fireman and three or four brakemen—but the hand upon the lever and the brain directing it have an immense responsibility.—*Westchester (N. Y.) Villager Record.*

1883 THE DETROIT **Post AND Tribune** 1883

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