



PART I. COWBOY YARNS

PART II. THE COWBOY OFF GUARD

PART III. COWBOY TYPES

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SONGS OF THE CATTLE

TRAIL AND COW CAMP

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS

ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED

LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA

MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.

TORONTO

SONGS OF THE CATTLE

TRAIL AND COW CAMP

COLLECTED BY

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"Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier

Ballads"; joint author with Dr.

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Book of Texas."

WITH A FOREWORD BY

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1919

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Set up and electrotyped. Published November, 1919.

"THAT THESE DEAR FRIENDS I LEAVE BEHIND

MAY KEEP KIND HEARTS' REMEMBRANCE OF THE LOVE WE HAD."

Solon.

In affectionate gratitude to a group of men, my intimate friends during

College days (brought under one roof by a "Fraternity"), whom I still

love not less but more,

Will Prather, Hammett Hardy, Penn Hargrove and Harry Steger, of

precious and joyous memory;

Norman Crozier, not yet quite emerged from Presbyterianism;

Eugene Barker, cynical, solid, unafraid;

"Cap'en" Duval, a gentleman of Virginia, sah;

Ed Miller, red-headed and royal-hearted;

Bates MacFarland, calm and competent without camouflage;

Jimmie Haven, who has put 'em over every good day since;

*Charley Johnson, "the Swede"--the fattest, richest and dearest of the
bunch;*

*Edgar Witt, whose loyal devotion and pertinacious energy built the
"Frat" house;*

Roy Bedichek, too big for any job he has yet tackled;

*"Curley" Duncan, who possesses all the virtues of the old time
cattleman and none of the vices of the new;*

Rom Rhome, the quiet and canny counter of coin;

Gavin Hunt, student and lover of all things beautiful;

Dick Kimball, the soldier; every inch of him a handsome man;

Alex and Bruce and Dave and George and "Freshman" Mathis and

Clarence, the six Freshmen we "took in"; while Ike MacFarland,

Alfred Pierce Ward, and Guy and Charlie Witt were still in the

process of assimilation,--

To this group of God's good fellows, I dedicate this little book.

No loopholes now are framing

Lean faces, grim and brown,
 No more keen eyes are aiming
 To bring the redskin down;
 But every wind careening
 Seems here to breathe a song--
 A song of brave careering,
 A saga of the strong.

FOREWORD

In collecting, arranging, editing, and preserving the "Songs of the Cattle Trail and Cow Camp," my friend John Lomax has performed a real service to American literature and to America. No verse is closer to the soil than this; none more realistic in the best sense of that much-abused word; none more truly interprets and expresses a part of our national life. To understand and appreciate these lyrics one should hear Mr. Lomax talk about them and sing them; for they were made for the voice to pronounce and for the ears to hear, rather than for the lamplit silence of the library. They are as oral as the chants of Vachel Lindsay; and when one has the pleasure of listening to Mr. Lomax--who loves these verses and the men who first sang them--one reconstructs in imagination the appropriate figures and romantic setting.

For nothing is so romantic as life itself. None of our illusions about life is so romantic as the truth. Hence the purest realism appeals to the mature imagination more powerfully than any impossible prettiness can do. The more we *know* of individual and universal life, the more we are excited and stimulated.

And the collection of these poems is an addition to American Scholarship as well as to American Literature. It was a wise policy of the Faculty of Harvard University to grant Mr. Lomax a traveling fellowship, that he might have the necessary leisure to discover and to collect these verses; it is really "original research," as interesting and surely as valuable as much that passes under that name; for it helps every one of us to understand our own country.

WM. LYON PHELPS.

Yale University,

July 27, 1919.

INTRODUCTION

"Look down, look down, that weary road,

"Tis the road that the sun goes down."

* * *

"'Twas way out West where the antelope roam,

And the coyote howls 'round the cowboy's home,
 Where the mountains are covered with chaparral frail,
 And the valleys are checkered with the cattle trail,
 Where the miner digs for the golden veins,
 And the cowboy rides o'er the silent plains,--"

The "Songs of the Cattle Trail and Cow Camp" does not purport to be an anthology of Western verse. As its title indicates, the contents of the book are limited to attempts, more or less poetic, in translating scenes connected with the life of a cowboy. The volume is in reality a by-product of my earlier collection, "Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads." In the former book I put together what seemed to me to be the best of the songs created and sung by the cowboys as they went about their work. In making the collection, the cowboys often sang or sent to me songs which I recognized as having already been in print; although the singer usually said that some other cowboy had sung the song to him and that he did not know where it had originated. For example, one night in New Mexico a cowboy sang to me, in typical cowboy music, Larry Chittenden's entire "Cowboys' Christmas Ball"; since that time the poem has often come to me in manuscript form as an original cowboy song. The changes--usually, it must be confessed, resulting in bettering the verse--which have occurred in oral transmission, are most interesting. Of one example, Charles Badger Clark's "High Chin Bob," I have printed, following Mr. Clark's poem, a cowboy version, which I submit to Mr. Clark and his admirers for their consideration.

In making selections for this volume from a large mass of material that came into my ballad hopper while hunting cowboy songs as a Traveling Fellow from Harvard University, I have included the best of the verse given me directly by the cowboys; other selections have come in through repeated recommendation of these men; others are vagrant verses from Western newspapers; and still others have been lifted from collections of Western verse written by such men as Charles Badger Clark, Jr., and Herbert H. Knibbs. To these two authors, as well as others who have permitted me to make use of their work, the grateful thanks of the collector are extended. As will be seen, almost one-half of the selections have no assignable authorship. I am equally grateful to these unknown authors.

All those who found "Cowboy Songs" diverting, it is believed, will make welcome "The Songs of the Cattle Trail and Cow Camp." Many of these have this claim to be called songs: they have been set to music by the cowboys, who, in their isolation and loneliness, have found solace in narrative or descriptive verse devoted to cattle scenes. Herein, again, through these quondam songs we may come to appreciate something of the spirit of the big West--its largeness, its freedom, its wholehearted hospitality, its genuine friendship. Here again, too, we may see the cowboy at work and at play; hear the jingle of his big bell spurs, the swish of his rope, the creaking of his saddle gear, the thud of thousands of hoofs on the long, long trail winding from Texas to Montana; and know something of the life that attracted from the East some of its best young blood to a work that was necessary in the winning of the West. The trails are becoming dust covered or grass grown or lost underneath the farmers' furrow; but in the selections of this volume, many of them poems by courtesy, men of today and those who are to follow, may sense, at least in some small measure, the service, the glamour, the romance of that knight-errant of the plains--the American cowboy.

J. A. L.

The University of Texas,

Austin, July 9, 1919.

PART I. COWBOY YARNS

OUT WHERE THE WEST BEGINS

THE SHALLOWS OF THE FORD

THE DANCE AT SILVER VALLEY

THE LEGEND OF BOASTFUL BILL

THE TEXAS COWBOY AND THE MEXICAN GREASER

BRONCHO VERSUS BICYCLE

RIDERS OF THE STARS

LASCA

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A TEXAS GIRL

THE GLORY TRAIL

HIGH CHIN BOB

TO HEAR HIM TELL IT

THE CLOWN'S BABY

THE DRUNKEN DESPERADO

MARTA OF MILRONE

JACK DEMPSEY'S GRAVE

THE CATTLE ROUND-UP

PART II. THE COWBOY OFF GUARD

A COWBOY'S WORRYING LOVE

THE COWBOY AND THE MAID

A COWBOY'S LOVE SONG

A BORDER AFFAIR

SNAGTOOTH SAL

LOVE LYRICS OF A COWBOY

THE BULL FIGHT

THE COWBOY'S VALENTINE

A COWBOY'S HOPELESS LOVE

THE CHASE

RIDING SONG

OUR LITTLE COWGIRL

I WANT MY TIME

WHO'S THAT CALLING SO SWEET?

SONG OF THE CATTLE TRAIL

A COWBOY'S SON

A COWBOY SONG

A NEVADA COWPUNCHER TO HIS BELOVED

THE COWBOY TO HIS FRIEND IN NEED

WHEN BOB GOT THROWN

COWBOY VERSUS BRONCHO

WHEN YOU'RE THROWN

PARDNERS

THE BRONC THAT WOULDN'T BUST

THE OL' COW HAWSE

THE BUNK-HOUSE ORCHESTRA

THE COWBOYS' DANCE SONG

THE COWBOYS' CHRISTMAS BALL

A DANCE AT THE RANCH

AT A COWBOY DANCE

THE COWBOYS' BALL

PART III. COWBOY TYPES

THE COWBOY

BAR-Z ON A SUNDAY NIGHT

A COWBOY RACE

THE HABIT

A RANGER

THE INSULT

"THE ROAD TO RUIN"

THE OUTLAW

THE DESERT

WHISKEY BILL,--A FRAGMENT

DENVER JIM

THE VIGILANTES

THE BANDIT'S GRAVE

THE OLD MACKENZIE TRAIL

THE SHEEP-HERDER

A COWBOY AT THE CARNIVAL

THE OLD COWMAN

THE GILA MONSTER ROUTE

THE CALL OF THE PLAINS

WHERE THE GRIZZLY DWELLS

A COWBOY TOAST

RIDIN' UP THE ROCKY TRAIL FROM TOWN

THE DISAPPOINTED TENDERFOOT

A COWBOY ALONE WITH HIS CONSCIENCE

JUST A-RIDIN'!

PART I

COWBOY YARNS

*The centipede runs across my head,
The vinegaroon crawls in my bed,
Tarantulas jump and scorpions play,
The broncs are grazing far away,
The rattlesnake gives his warning cry,
And the coyotes sing their lullaby,
While I sleep soundly beneath the sky.*

OUT WHERE THE WEST BEGINS

OUT where the handclasp's a little stronger,
Out where the smile dwells a little longer,
That's where the West begins;
Out where the sun is a little brighter,
Where the snows that fall are a trifle whiter,
Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter,
That's where the West begins.

Out where the skies are a trifle bluer,
Out where friendship's a little truer,
That's where the West begins;
Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,
Where there's laughter in every streamlet flowing,
Where there's more of reaping and less of sowing,
That's where the West begins.

Out where the world is in the making,
Where fewer hearts in despair are aching,
That's where the West begins;
Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,
And a man makes friends without half trying,
That's where the West begins.

Arthur Chapman.

THE SHALLOWS OF THE FORD

DID you ever wait for daylight when the stars along the river
Floated thick and white as snowflakes in the water deep and strange,
Till a whisper through the aspens made the current break and shiver
As the frosty edge of morning seemed to melt and spread and change?

Once I waited, almost wishing that the dawn would never find me;
Saw the sun roll up the ranges like the glory of the Lord;
Was about to wake my pardner who was sleeping close behind me,
When I saw the man we wanted spur his pony to the ford.

Saw the ripples of the shallows and the muddy streaks that followed,
As the pony stumbled toward me in the narrows of the bend;
Saw the face I used to welcome, wild and watchful, lined and hollowed;
And God knows I wished to warn him, for I once had called him friend.

But an oath had come between us--I was paid by Law and Order;
He was outlaw, rustler, killer--so the border whisper ran;
Left his word in Caliente that he'd cross the Rio border--
Call me coward? But I hailed him--"Riding close to daylight, Dan!"

Just a hair and he'd have got me, but my voice, and not the warning,

Caught his hand and held him steady; then he nodded, spoke my name,
 Reined his pony round and fanned it in the bright and silent morning,
 Back across the sunlit Rio up the trail on which he came.

He had passed his word to cross it--I had passed my word to get him--
 We broke even and we knew it; 'twas a case of give and take
 For old times. I could have killed him from the brush; instead, I let
 him
 Ride his trail--I turned--my pardner flung his arm and stretched
 awake;

Saw me standing in the open; pulled his gun and came beside me;
 Asked a question with his shoulder as his left hand pointed toward
 Muddy streaks that thinned and vanished--not a word, but hard he
 eyed me
 As the water cleared and sparkled in the shallows of the ford.

Henry Herbert Knibbs.

THE DANCE AT SILVER VALLEY

DON'T you hear the big spurs jingle?

Don't you feel the red blood tingle?

Be it smile or be it frown,

Be it dance or be it fight,

Broncho Bill has come to town

To dance a dance tonight.

Chaps, sombrero, handkerchief, silver spurs at heel;
 "Hello, Gil!" and "Hello, Pete!" "How do you think you feel?"
 "Drinks are mine. Come fall in, boys; crowd up on the right.
 Here's happy days and honey joys. I'm going to dance tonight."

(On his hip in leathern tube, a case of dark blue steel.)

Bill, the broncho buster, from the ranch at Beaver Bend,

Ninety steers and but one life in his hands to spend;

Ready for a fight or spree; ready for a race;

Going blind with bridle loose every inch of space.

Down at Johnny Schaeffer's place, see them trooping in,

Up above the women laugh; down below is gin.

Belle McClure is dressed in blue, ribbon in her hair;

Broncho Bill is shaved and slick, all his throat is bare.

Round and round with Belle McClure he whirls a dizzy spin.

Jim Kershaw, the gambler, waits,--white his hands and slim.

Bill whispers, "Belle, you know it well; it is me or him.

Jim Kershaw, so help me God, if you dance with Belle

It is either you or me must travel down to hell."

Jim put his arm around her waist, her graceful waist and slim.

Don't you hear the banjo laugh? Hear the fiddles scream?

Broncho Bill leaned at the door, watched the twirling stream.

Twenty fiends were at his heart snarling, "Kill him sure."

(Out of hell that woman came.) "I love you, Belle McClure."

Broncho Bill, he laughed and chewed and careless he did seem.

The dance is done. Shots crack as one. The crowd shoves for the door.

Broncho Bill is lying there and blood upon the floor.

"You've finished me; you've gambler's luck; you've won the trick and

Belle.

Mine the soul that here tonight is passing down to hell.

And I must ride the trail alone. Goodbye to Belle McClure."

Downstairs on the billiard cloth, something lying white,
Upstairs still the dance goes on, all the lamps are bright.
Round and round in merry spin--on the floor a blot;
Laugh, and chaff and merry spin--such a little spot.
Broncho Bill has come to town and danced his dance tonight.

Don't you hear the fiddle shrieking?

Don't you hear the banjo speaking?

Don't you hear the big spurs jingle?

Don't you feel the red blood tingle?

Faces dyed with desert brown,

(One that's set and white);

Broncho Bill has come to town

And danced his dance tonight.

William Maxwell.

THE LEGEND OF BOASTFUL BILL

AT a round-up on the Gila
One sweet morning long ago,
Ten of us was throwed quite freely
By a hoss from Idaho.
An' we 'lowed he'd go a-beggin'
For a man to break his pride
Till, a-hitchin' up one leggin',
Boastful Bill cut loose an' cried:
"I'm a ornery proposition for to hurt,
I fulfil my earthly mission with a quirt,
I can ride the highest liver

'Twixt the Gulf an' Powder River,
An' I'll break this thing as easy as I'd flirt."

So Bill climbed the Northern fury
An' they mangled up the air
Till a native of Missouri
Would have owned the brag was fair.
Though the plunges kept him reelin'
An' the wind it flapped his shirt,
Loud above the hoss's squealin'
We could hear our friend assert:
"I'm the one to take such rockin's as a joke;
Someone hand me up the makin's of a smoke.
If you think my fame needs brightnin',
Why, I'll rope a streak o' lightnin'
An' spur it up an' quirt it till it's broke."

Then one caper of repulsion
Broke that hoss's back in two,
Cinches snapped in the convulsion,
Skyward man and saddle flew,
Up they mounted, never flaggin',
And we watched them through our tears,
While this last, thin bit o' braggin'
Came a-floatin' to our ears:
"If you ever watched my habits very close,
You would know I broke such rabbits by the gross.
I have kept my talent hidin',

I'm too good for earthly ridin',

So I'm off to bust the lightnin'--Adios!"

Years have passed since that ascension;

Boastful Bill ain't never lit;

So we reckon he's a-wrenchin'

Some celestial outlaw's bit.

When the night wind flaps our slickers,

And the rain is cold and stout,

And the lightnin' flares and flickers,

We can sometimes hear him shout:

"I'm a ridin' son o' thunder o' the sky,

I'm a broncho twistin' wonder on the fly.

Hey, you earthlin's, shut your winders,

We're a-rippin' clouds to flinders.

If this blue-eyed darlin' kicks at you, you die."

Star-dust on his chaps and saddle,

Scornful still of jar and jolt,

He'll come back sometime a-straddle

Of a bald-faced thunderbolt;

And the thin-skinned generation

Of that dim and distant day

Sure will stare with admiration

When they hear old Boastful say:

"I was first, as old raw-hiders all confest,

I'm the last of all rough riders, and the best.

Huh! you soft and dainty floaters

With your aeroplanes and motors,

Huh! are you the greatgrandchildren of the West?"

From recitation, original, by Charles Badger Clark, Jr.

THE TEXAS COWBOY AND THE MEXICAN GREASER

I THINK we can all remember when a Greaser hadn't no show

In Palo Pinto particular,--it ain't very long ago;

A powerful feelin' of hatred ag'in the whole Greaser race

That murdered bold Crockett and Bowie pervaded all in the place.

Why, the boys would draw on a Greaser as quick as they would on a
steer;

They was shot down without warnin' often, in the memory of many here.

One day the bark of pistols was heard ringin' out in the air,

And a Greaser, chased by some ranchmen, tore round here into the
square.

I don't know what he's committed,--'tain't likely anyone knew,--

But I wouldn't bet a check on the issue; if you knew the gang, neither
would you.

Breathless and bleeding, the Greaser fell down by the side of the
wall;

And a man sprang out before him,--a man both strong and tall,--

By his clothes I should say a cowboy,--a stranger in town, I think,--

With his pistol he waved back the gang, who was wild with rage and
drink.

"I warn ye, get back!" he said, "or I'll blow your heads in two!

A dozen on one poor creature, and him wounded and bleeding, too!"

The gang stood back for a minute; then up spoke Poker Bill:

"Young man, yer a stranger, I reckon. We don't wish yer any ill;
But come out of the range of the Greaser, or, as sure as I live,
you'll croak;"

And he drew a bead on the stranger. I'll tell yer it wa'n't no joke.
But the stranger moven' no muscle as he looked in the bore of Bill's
gun;

He hadn't no thought to stir, sir; he hadn't no thought to run;
But he spoke out cool and quiet, "I might live for a thousand year
And not die at last so nobly as defendin' this Greaser here;
For he's wounded, now, and helpless, and hasn't had no fair show;
And the first of ye boys that strikes him, I'll lay that first one
low."

The gang respected the stranger that for another was willing to die;
They respected the look of daring they saw in that cold, blue eye.
They saw before them a hero that was glad in the right to fall;
And he was a Texas cowboy,--never heard of Rome at all.
Don't tell me of yer Romans, or yer bridge bein' held by three;
True manhood's the same in Texas as it was in Rome, d'ye see?
Did the Greaser escape? Why certain. I saw the hull crowd over thar
At the ranch of Bill Simmons, the gopher, with their glasses over the
bar.

From recitation. Anonymous.

BRONCHO VERSUS BICYCLE

THE first that we saw of the high-tone tramp
War over thar at our Pecos camp;
He war comin' down the Santa Fe trail

Astride of a wheel with a crooked tail,
A-skinnin' along with a merry song
An' a-ringin' a little warnin' gong.
He looked so outlandish, strange and queer
That all of us grinned from ear to ear,
And every boy on the round-up swore
He never seed sich a hoss before.

Wal, up he rode with a sunshine smile
An' a-smokin' a cigarette, an' I'll
Be kicked in the neck if I ever seen
Sich a saddle as that on his queer machine.
Why, it made us laugh, fer it wasn't half
Big enough fer the back of a suckin' calf.
He tuk our fun in a keerless way,
A-venturin' only once to say
Thar wasn't a broncho about the place
Could down that wheel in a ten-mile race.

I'd a lightnin' broncho out in the herd
That could split the air like a flyin' bird,
An' I hinted round in an off-hand way,
That, providin' the enterprize would pay,
I thought as I might jes' happen to light
On a hoss that would leave him out er sight.
In less'n a second we seen him yank
A roll o' greenbacks out o' his flank,
An' he said if we wanted to bet, to name

The limit, an' he would tackle the game.

Jes' a week before we had all been down

On a jamboree to the nearest town,

An' the whiskey joints and the faro games

An' a-shakin' our hoofs with the dance hall dames,

Made a wholesale bust; an', pard, I'll be cussed

If a man in the outfit had any dust.

An' so I explained, but the youth replied

That he'd lay the money matter aside,

An' to show that his back didn't grow no moss

He'd bet his machine against my hoss.

I tuk him up, an' the bet war closed,

An' me a-chucklin', fer I supposed

I war playin' in dead-sure, winnin' luck

In the softest snap I had ever struck.

An' the boys chipped in with a knowin' grin,

Fer they thought the fool had no chance to win.

An' so we agreed fer to run that day

To the Navajo cross, ten miles away,--

As handsome a track as you ever seed

Fer testin' a hosses prettiest speed.

Apache Johnson and Texas Ned

Saddled up their hosses an' rode ahead

To station themselves ten miles away

An' act as judges an' see fair play;

While Mexican Bart and big Jim Hart

Stayed back fer to give us an even start.

I got aboard of my broncho bird

An' we came to the scratch an' got the word;

An' I laughed till my mouth spread from ear to ear

To see that tenderfoot drop to the rear.

The first three miles slipped away first-rate;

Then bronc began fer to lose his gait.

But I warn't oneasy an' didn't mind

With tenderfoot more'n a mile behind.

So I jogged along with a cowboy song

Till all of a sudden I heard that gong

A-ringin' a warnin' in my ear--

Ting, ting, ting, ting--too infernal near;

An' lookin' backwards I seen that chump

Of a tenderfoot gainin' every jump.

I hit old bronc a cut with the quirt

An' once more got him to scratchin' dirt;

But his wind got weak, an' I tell you, boss,

I seen he wasn't no ten-mile hoss.

Still, the plucky brute took another shoot

An' pulled away from the wheel galoot.

But the animal couldn't hold his gait;

An' the idea somehow entered my pate

That if tenderfoot's legs didn't lose their grip

He'd own that hoss at the end of the trip.

Closer an' closer come tenderfoot,

An' harder the whip to the hoss I put;
But the Eastern cuss, with a smile on his face
Ran up to my side with his easy pace--
Rode up to my side, an' dern his hide,
Remarked 'twere a pleasant day fer a ride;
Then axed, onconcerned, if I had a match,
An' on his britches give it a scratch,
Lit a cigarette, said he wished me good-day,
An' as fresh as a daisy scooted away.

Ahead he went, that infernal gong
A-ringin' "good-day" as he flew along,
An' the smoke from his cigarette came back
Like a vaporous snicker along his track.
On an' on he sped, gettin' further ahead,
His feet keepin' up that onceseable tread,
Till he faded away in the distance, an' when
I seed the condemned Eastern rooster again
He war thar with the boys at the end of the race,
That same keerless, onconsarned smile on his face.

Now, pard, when a cowboy gits licked he don't swar
Nor kick, if the beatin' are done on the squar;
So I tuck that Easterner right by the hand
An' told him that broncho awaited his brand.
Then I axed him his name, an' where from he came,
An' how long he'd practiced that wheel-rollin' game.
Tom Stevens he said war his name, an' he come

From a town they call Bosting, in old Yankeedom.

Then he jist paralyzed us by sayin' he'd whirled

That very identical wheel round the world.

Wal, pard, that's the story of how that smart chap

Done me up w'en I thought I had sich a soft snap,

Done me up on a race with remarkable ease,

An' lowered my pride a good many degrees.

Did I give him the hoss? W'y o' course I did, boss,

An' I tell you it warn't no diminutive loss.

He writ me a letter from back in the East,

An' said he presented the neat little beast

To a feller named Pope, who stands at the head

O' the ranch where the cussed wheel hosses are bred.

Anonymous.

RIDERS OF THE STARS

TWENTY abreast down the Golden Street ten thousand riders marched;

Bow-legged boys in their swinging chaps, all clumsily keeping time;

And the Angel Host to the lone, last ghost their delicate eyebrows

arched

As the swaggering sons of the open range drew up to the throne

sublime.

Gaunt and grizzled, a Texas man from out of the concourse strode,

And doffed his hat with a rude, rough grace, then lifted his eagle

head;

The sunlit air on his silvered hair and the bronze of his visage

glowed;

"Marster, the boys have a talk to make on the things up here," he said.

A hush ran over the waiting throng as the Cherubim replied:

"He that readeth the hearts of men He deemeth your challenge strange,
Though He long hath known that ye crave your own, that ye would not
walk but ride,

Oh, restless sons of the ancient earth, ye men of the open range!"

Then warily spake the Texas man: "A petition and no complaint
We here present, if the Law allows and the Marster He thinks it fit;
We-all agree to the things that be, but we're longing for things that
ain't,

So we took a vote and we made a plan and here is the plan we writ:--

*"Give us a range and our horses and ropes, open the Pearly Gate,
And turn us loose in the unfenced blue riding the sunset rounds,
Hunting each stray in the Milky Way and running the Rancho straight;
Not crowding the dogie stars too much on their way to the
bedding-grounds.*

*"Maverick comets that's running wild, we'll rope 'em and brand 'em
fair,
So they'll quit stampeding the starry herd and scaring the folks
below,
And we'll save 'em prime for the round-up time, and we riders'll all
be there,
Ready and willing to do our work as we did in the long ago.*

*"We've studied the Ancient Landmarks, Sir; Taurus, the Bear, and
Mars,*

*And Venus a-smiling across the west as bright as a burning coal,
Plain to guide as we punchers ride night-herding the little stars,
With Saturn's rings for our home corral and the Dipper our water
hole.*

*"Here, we have nothing to do but yarn of the days that have long
gone by,
And our singing it doesn't fit in up here though we tried it for old
time's sake;
Our hands are itching to swing a rope and our legs are stiff; that's
why
We ask you, Marster, to turn us loose--just give us an even break!"*

Then the Lord He spake to the Cherubim, and this was His kindly word:

"He that keepeth the threefold keys shall open and let them go;
Turn these men to their work again to ride with the starry herd;
My glory sings in the toil they crave; 'tis their right. I would have
it so."

Have you heard in the starlit dusk of eve when the lone coyotes roam,
The *Yip! Yip! Yip!* of a hunting cry and the echo that shrilled
afar,
As you listened still on a desert hill and gazed at the twinkling
dome,
And a viewless rider swept the sky on the trail of a shooting star?
Henry Herbert Knibbs.

LASCA

I WANT free life, and I want fresh air;
And I sigh for the canter after the cattle,

The crack of the whips like shots in battle,
The medley of hoofs and horns and heads
That wars and wrangles and scatters and spreads;
The green beneath and the blue above,
And dash and danger, and life and love--
And Lasca!

Lasca used to ride
On a mouse-grey mustang close to my side,
With blue serape and bright-belled spur;
I laughed with joy as I looked at her!
Little knew she of books or creeds;
An Ave Maria sufficed her needs;
Little she cared save to be at my side,
To ride with me, and ever to ride,
From San Saba's shore to Lavaca's tide.
She was as bold as the billows that beat,
She was as wild as the breezes that blow:
From her little head to her little feet,
She was swayed in her suppleness to and fro
By each gust of passion; a sapling pine
That grows on the edge of a Kansas bluff
And wars with the wind when the weather is rough,
Is like this Lasca, this love of mine.
She would hunger that I might eat,
Would take the bitter and leave me the sweet;
But once, when I made her jealous for fun

At something I whispered or looked or done,
One Sunday, in San Antonio,
To a glorious girl in the Alamo,
She drew from her garter a little dagger,
And--sting of a wasp--it made me stagger!
An inch to the left, or an inch to the right,
And I shouldn't be maundering here tonight;
But she sobbed, and sobbing, so quickly bound
Her torn rebosa about the wound
That I swiftly forgave her. Scratches don't count
In Texas, down by the Rio Grande.

Her eye was brown--a deep, deep brown;
Her hair was darker than her eye;
And something in her smile and frown,
Curled crimson lip and instep high,
Showed that there ran in each blue vein,
Mixed with the milder Aztec strain,
The vigorous vintage of Old Spain.
She was alive in every limb
With feeling, to the finger tips;
And when the sun is like a fire,
And sky one shining, soft sapphire
One does not drink in little sips.

* * *

The air was heavy, the night was hot,
I sat by her side and forgot, forgot;

Forgot the herd that were taking their rest,
Forgot that the air was close oppressed,
That the Texas norther comes sudden and soon,
In the dead of the night or the blaze of the noon;
That, once let the herd at its breath take fright,
Nothing on earth can stop their flight;
And woe to the rider, and woe to the steed,
That falls in front of their mad stampede!

* * *

Was that thunder? I grasped the cord
Of my swift mustang without a word.
I sprang to the saddle, and she clung behind.
Away! on a hot chase down the wind!
But never was fox-hunt half so hard,
And never was steed so little spared.
For we rode for our lives. You shall hear how we fared
In Texas, down by the Rio Grande.

The mustang flew, and we urged him on;
There was one chance left, and you have but one--
Halt, jump to the ground, and shoot your horse;
Crouch under his carcass, and take your chance;
And if the steers in their frantic course
Don't batter you both to pieces at once,
You may thank your star; if not, goodbye
To the quickening kiss and the long-drawn sigh,
And the open air and the open sky,

In Texas, down by the Rio Grande.

The cattle gained on us, and, just as I felt
For my old six-shooter behind in my belt,
Down came the mustang, and down came we,
Clinging together--and, what was the rest?
A body that spread itself on my breast,
Two arms that shielded my dizzy head,
Two lips that hard to my lips were prest;
Then came thunder in my ears,
As over us surged the sea of steers,
Blows that beat blood into my eyes,
And when I could rise--
Lasca was dead!

* * *

I gouged out a grave a few feet deep,
And there in the Earth's arms I laid her to sleep;
And there she is lying, and no one knows;
And the summer shines, and the winter snows;
For many a day the flowers have spread
A pall of petals over her head;
And the little grey hawk hangs aloft in the air,
And the sly coyote trots here and there,
And the black snake glides and glitters and slides
Into the rift of a cottonwood tree;
And the buzzard sails on,
And comes and is gone,

Stately and still, like a ship at sea.

And I wonder why I do not care

For the things that are, like the things that were.

Does half my heart lie buried there

In Texas, down by the Rio Grande?

Frank Desprez.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A TEXAS GIRL

SHE was a Texas maiden, she came of low degree,

Her clothes were worn and faded, her feet from shoes were free;

Her face was tanned and freckled, her hair was sun-burned, too,

Her whole darned *tout ensemble* was painful for to view!

She drove a lop-eared mule team attached unto a plow,

The trickling perspiration exuding from her brow;

And often she lamented her cruel, cruel fate,

As but a po' white's daughter down in the Lone Star State.

No courtiers came to woo her, she never had a beau,

Her misfit face precluded such things as that, you know,--

She was nobody's darling, no feller's solid girl,

And poets never called her an uncut Texas pearl.

Her only two companions was those two flea-bit mules,

And these she but regarded as animated tools

To plod along the furrows in patience up and down

And pull the ancient wagon when pap'd go to town.

No fires of wild ambition were flaming in her soul,

Her eyes with tender passion she'd never upward roll;

The wondrous world she'd heard of, to her was but a dream

As walked she in the furrows behind that lop-eared team.
Born on that small plantation, 'twas there she thought she'd die;
She never longed for pinions that she might rise and fly
To other lands far distant, where breezes fresh and cool
Would never shake and tremble from brayings of a mule.

* * *

But yesterday we saw her dressed up in gorgeous style!
A half a dozen fellows were basking in her smile!
She'd jewels on her fingers, and jewels in her ears--
Great sparkling, flashing brilliants that hung as frozen tears!
The feet once nude and soil-stained were clad in Frenchy boots,
The once tanned face bore tintings of miscellaneous fruits;
The voice that once admonished the mules to move along
Was tuned to new-born music, as sweet as Siren's song!

Her tall and lanky father, one knows as "Sleepy Jim,"
Is now addressed as Colonel by men who honor him;
And youths in finest raiment now take him by the paw,
Each in the hope that some day he'll call him dad-in-law.
Their days of toil are over, their sun has risen at last,
A gold-embroidered curtain now hides their rocky past;
For was it not discovered their little patch of soil
Had rested there for ages above a flow of oil?

James Barton Adams.

THE GLORY TRAIL

'WAY high up the Mogollons,[1]

Among the mountain tops,

A lion cleaned a yearlin's bones
And licked his thankful chops,
When on the picture who should ride,
A-trippin' down the slope,
But High-Chin Bob, with sinful pride
And mav'rick-hungry rope.

*"Oh, glory be to me," says he,
"And fame's unfadin' flowers!
All meddlin' hands are far away;
I ride my good top-hawse today
And I'm top-rope of the Lazy J--
Hi! kitty cat, you're ours!"*

That lion licked his paw so brown
And dreamed soft dreams of veal--
And then the circlin' loop sung down
And roped him 'round his meal.
He yowled quick fury to the world
Till all the hills yelled back;
The top-hawse gave a snort and whirled
And Bob caught up the slack.

*"Oh, glory be to me," laughs he.
"We hit the glory trail.
No human man as I have read
Darst loop a ragin' lion's head,
Nor ever hawse could drag one dead
Until we told the tale."*

'Way high up the Mogollons
That top-hawse done his best,
Through whippin' brush and rattlin' stones,
From canyon-floor to crest
But ever when Bob turned and hoped
A limp remains to find,
A red-eyed lion, belly roped
But healthy, loped behind.

*"Oh, glory be to me," grunts he,
"This glory trail is rough,
Yet even till the Judgment Morn
I'll keep this dally 'round the horn,
For never any hero born
Could stoop to holler: 'nuff!'"*

Three suns had rode their circle home
Beyond the desert's rim,
And turned their star herds loose to roam
The ranges high and dim;
Yet up and down and round and 'cross
Bob pounded, weak and wan,
For pride still glued him to his hawse
And glory drove him on.

*"Oh, glory be to me," sighs he.
"He kaint be drug to death,
But now I know beyond a doubt
Them heroes I have read about*

Was only fools that stuck it out

To end of mortal breath."

'Way high up the Mogollons

A prospect man did swear

That moon dreams melted down his bones

And hoisted up his hair:

A ribby cow-hawse thundered by,

A lion trailed along,

A rider, ga'nt, but chin on high,

Yelled out a crazy song.

"Oh, glory be to me!" cries he,

"And to my noble noose!

O stranger, tell my pards below

I took a rampin' dream in tow,

And if I never lay him low,

I'll never turn him loose!"

Charles Badger Clark.

[1] Pronounced by the natives "muggy-yones."

HIGH CHIN BOB

'WAY high up in the Mokiones, among the mountain tops,

A lion cleaned a yearling's bones and licks his thankful chops;

And who upon the scene should ride, a-trippin' down the slope,

But High Chin Bob of sinful pride and maverick-hungry rope.

"Oh, glory be to me!" says he, "an' fame's unfadin' flowers;

I ride my good top hoss today and I'm top hand of Lazy-J,

So, kitty-cat, you're ours!"

The lion licked his paws so brown, and dreamed soft dreams of veal,
As High Chin's rope came circlin' down and roped him round his meal;
She yowled quick fury to the world and all the hills yelled back;
That top horse gave a snort and whirled and Bob took up the slack.
"Oh, glory be to me!" says he, "we'll hit the glory trail.
No man has looped a lion's head and lived to drag the critter dead
Till I shall tell the tale."

'Way high up in the Mokiones that top hoss done his best,
'Mid whippin' brush and rattlin' stones from canon-floor to crest;
Up and down and round and cross Bob pounded weak and wan,
But pride still glued him to his hoss and glory spurred him on.
"Oh, glory be to me!" says he, "this glory trail is rough!
But I'll keep this dally round the horn until the toot of judgment
morn
Before I'll holler 'nough!"

Three suns had rode their circle home, beyond the desert rim,
And turned their star herds loose to roam the ranges high and dim;
And whenever Bob turned and hoped the limp remains to find,
A red-eyed lion, belly roped, but healthy, loped behind!
"Oh, glory be to me," says Bob, "he caint be drug to death!
These heroes that I've read about were only fools that stuck it
out
To the end of mortal breath."

'Way high up in the Mokiones, if you ever camp there at night,
You'll hear a rukus among the stones that'll lift your hair with
fright;

You'll see a cow-hoss thunder by--a lion trail along,
And the rider bold, with his chin on high, sings forth his glory song:
"Oh, glory be to me!" says he, "and to my mighty noose.
Oh, pardner, tell my friends below I took a ragin' dream in tow,
And if I didn't lay him low, I never turned him loose!"

From oral rendition.

TO HEAR HIM TELL IT

I WAS just about to take a drink--
I was mighty dry--
So I hailed an old time cowman
Who was passing by,
"Come in, Ole Timer! have a drink!
Kinda warm today!"
As we leaned across the bar-rail--
"How's things up your way?"

"Stock is doin' fairly good,
Range is gettin' fine;
I jes dropped down to meetin' here
To spend a little time.
Con'sidable stuff a-movin' now--
Cows an' hosses, too,
Prices high an' a big demand--
Now I'm tellin' you!

"I've loaded out my feeders,
Got a good price all aroun';
Sold 'em in Kansas City

To a commission man named Brown.

A thousand told o' mixed stuff,

In pretty fair shape, too,"

Said the old Texas cowman,

"Now I'm tellin' you!

"I've been in this yere country

Since late in fifty-nine,

I know every foot o' sage brush

Clear to the southern line.

Got my first bunch started up

Long in seventy-two,

Had to ride range with a long rope--

Now I'm tellin' you!

"Lordy, I kin remember

Them good ole early days

When we ust t' trail the herds north

'N forty different ways.

Jes'n point 'em from the beddin' groun'

An' let 'em drift right through,"

Said the reminiscent cowman,

"Now I'm tellin' you!

"Yessir, trailed 'em up to Wichita,

Cross the Kansas line,

Made deliveries at Benton

As early as fifty-nine.

Turned 'em most to soldiers,

Some went to Injuns, too,

Beef wasn't nigh so high then--

Now I'm tellin' you!

"Son, I've fit nigh every Injun

That ever roamed the plains,

'N I was one o' the best hands

That ever pulled bridle reins.

Why, you boys don't know range life--

You don't seem to git the ways,

Like we did down in Texas

In them good ol' early days!

"Yes, thing's a heap sight diff'rent now!

'Tain't like in them ol' days

When cowmen trailed their herds north

'N forty diff'rent ways.

We ship 'em on the railroad now,

Load out on the big S. P.,"

Says the relic of Texas cowman

As he takes a drink with me.

"I figger on buyin' more feeders,

From down across the line--

Chihuahua an' Sonora stuff,

An' hold 'em till they're prime.

So here's to the steers an' yearlin's!"

As we clink our glasses two,

"Things ain't the same as they used to be,

Now I'm tellin' you!

"I got t' git out an' hustle,

I ain't got time t' stay;

Jes' want t' see some uh the boys

'N then I'm on my way.

There's many a hand here right now

That I know'd long, long ago,

When ranch land was free an' open

An' the plowman had a show.

"'Tain't often we git together

To swap yarns an' tell our lies,"

Said the old time Texas cowman

As a mist comes to his eyes.

"So let's drink up; here's how!"

As we drain our glasses two,

"Them was good ol' days an' good ol' ways--

Now I'm tellin' you!"

He talked and talked and yarned away,

He harped on days of yore--

My head it ached and I grew faint;

My legs got tired and sore.

Then a woman yelled, "You come here, John!"

And Lordy! how he flew!

And the last I heard as he broke and ran

Was, "Now I'm tellin' you!"

I won't never hail old timers

To have a drink with me,
To learn the history of the range
As far back as seventy-three.
And the next time that I'm thirsty
And feeling kind of blue,
I'll step right up and drink alone--
Now I'm tellin' you!

From the Wild Bunch.

THE CLOWN'S BABY

IT was on the western frontier,--
The miners, rugged and brown,
Were gathered round the posters,
The circus had come to town!
The great tent shone in the darkness
Like a wonderful palace of light,
And rough men crowded the entrance,--
Shows didn't come every night!

Not a woman's face among them;
Many a face that was bad,
And some that were only vacant,
And some that were very sad.
And behind a canvas curtain,
In a corner of the place,
The clown, with chalk and vermillion,
Was "making up" his face.

A weary looking woman

With a smile that still was sweet,
Sewed on a little garment,
With a cradle at her feet.
Pantaloon stood ready and waiting,
It was time for the going on;
But the clown in vain searched wildly,--
The "property baby" was gone!

He murmured, impatiently hunting,
"It's strange that I cannot find--
There, I've looked in every corner;
It must have been left behind!"
The miners were stamping and shouting,
They were not patient men;
The clown bent over the cradle,--
"I must take you, little Ben."

The mother started and shivered,
But trouble and want were near;
She lifted the baby gently,
"You'll be very careful, dear?"
"Careful? You foolish darling!"
How tenderly it was said!
What a smile shone through the chalk and paint!
"I love each hair of his head!"

The noise rose into an uproar,
Misrule for the time was king;
The clown with a foolish chuckle

Bolted into the ring.

But as, with a squeak and flourish,

The fiddles closed their tune

"You'll hold him as if he were made of glass?"

Said the clown to the pantaloon.

The jovial fellow nodded,

"I've a couple myself," he said.

"I know how to handle 'em, bless you!

Old fellow, go ahead!"

The fun grew fast and furious,

And not one of all the crowd

Had guessed that the baby was alive,

When he suddenly laughed aloud.

Oh, that baby laugh! It was echoed

From the benches with a ring,

And the roughest customer there sprang up

With, "Boys, it's the real thing."

The ring was jammed in a minute,

Not a man that did not strive

For a "shot at holding the baby,"--

The baby that was alive!

He was thronged with kneeling suitors

In the midst of the dusty ring,

And he held his court right royally,--

The fair little baby king,--

Till one of the shouting courtiers,--

A man with a bold, hard face,
The talk, for miles, of the country,
And the terror of the place,

Raised the little king to his shoulder
And chuckled, "Look at that!"
As the chubby fingers clutched his hair;
Then, "Boys, hand round the hat!"
There never was such a hatful
Of silver and gold and notes;
People are not always penniless
Because they don't wear coats.

And then, "Three cheers for the baby!"
I tell you those cheers were meant,
And the way that they were given
Was enough to raise the tent.
And then there was sudden silence
And a gruff old miner said,
"Come boys, enough of this rumpus;
It's time it was put to bed."

So, looking a little sheepish,
But with faces strangely bright,
The audience, somewhat lingering,
Flocked out into the night.
And the bold-faced leader chuckled,
"He wasn't a bit afraid!
He's as game as he's good-looking!"

Boys, that was a show that *paid!*"

Margaret Vandergrift.

THE DRUNKEN DESPERADO

I'M wild and woolly and full of fleas,
I'm hard to curry below the knees,
I'm a she-wolf from Shamon Creek,
For I was dropped from a lightning streak
And it's my night to hollow--Whoo-pee!

I stayed in Texas till they runned me out,
Then in Bull Frog they chased me about,
I walked a little and rode some more,
For I've shot up a town before
And it's my night to hollow--Whoo-pee!

Give me room and turn me loose
I'm peaceable without excuse.
I never killed for profit or fun,
But riled, I'm a regular son of a gun
And it's my night to hollow--Whoo-pee!

Good-eye Jim will serve the crowd;
The rule goes here no sweetnin' 'lowed.
And we'll drink now the Nixon kid,
For I rode to town and lifted the lid
And it's my night to hollow--Whoo-pee!

You can guess how quick a man must be,
For I killed eleven and wounded three;
And brothers and daddies aren't makin' a sound

Though they know where the kid is found

And it's my night to hollow--Whoo-pee!

When I get old and my aim aint true

And it's three to one and wounded, too,

I won't beg and claw the ground;

For I'll be dead before I'm found

When it's my night to hollow--Whoo-pee!

Baird Boyd.

MARTA OF MILRONE

I SHOT him where the Rio flows;

I shot him when the moon arose;

And where he lies the vulture knows

Along the Tinto River.

In schools of eastern culture pale

My cloistered flesh began to fail;

They bore me where the deserts quail

To winds from out the sun.

I looked upon the land and sky,

Nor hoped to live nor feared to die;

And from my hollow breast a sigh

Fell o'er the burning waste.

But strong I grew and tall I grew;

I drank the region's balm and dew,--

It made me lithe in limb and thew,--

How swift I rode and ran!

And oft it was my joy to ride

Over the sand-blown ocean wide

While, ever smiling at my side,

Rode Marta of Milrone.

A flood of horned heads before,

The trampled thunder, smoke and roar,

Of full four thousand hoofs, or more--

A cloud, a sea, a storm!

Oh, wonderful the desert gleamed,

As, man and maid, we spoke and dreamed

Of love in life, till white wastes seemed

Like plains of paradise.

Her eyes with Love's great magic shone.

"Be mine, O Marta of Milrone,--

Your hand, your heart be all my own!"

Her lips made sweet response.

"I love you, yes; for you are he

Who from the East should come to me--

And I have waited long!" Oh, we

Were happy as the sun.

There came upon a hopeless quest,

With hell and hatred in his breast,

A stranger, who his love confessed

To Marta long in vain.

To me she spoke: "Chosen mate,

His eyes are terrible with fate,--

I fear his love, I fear his hate,--

I fear some looming ill!"

Then to the church we twain did ride,

I kissed her as she rode beside.

How fair--how passing fair my bride

With gold combs in her hair!

Before the Spanish priest we stood

Of San Gregorio's brotherhood--

A shot rang out!--and in her blood

My dark-eyed darling lay.

O God! I carried her beside

The Virgin's altar where she cried,--

Smiling upon me ere she died,--

"Adieu, my love, adieu!"

I knelt before St. Mary's shrine

And held my dead one's hand in mine,

"Vengeance," I cried, "O Lord, be thine,

But I thy minister!"

I kissed her thrice and sealed my vow,--

Her eyes, her sea-cold lips and brow,--

"Farewell, my heart is dying now,

O Marta of Milrone!"

Then swift upon my steed I lept;

My streaming eyes the desert swept;

I saw the accursed where he crept

Against the blood-red sun.

I galloped straight upon his track,

And never more my eyes looked back;
The world was barred with red and black;
My heart was flaming coal.

Through the delirious twilight dim
And the black night I followed him;
Hills did we cross and rivers swim,--
My fleet foot horse and I.

The morn burst red, a gory wound,
O'er iron hills and savage ground;
And there was never another sound
Save beat of horses' hoofs.

Unto the murderer's ear they said,
"Thou'rt of the dead! Thou'rt of the dead!"
Still on his stallion black he sped
While death spurred on behind.

Fiery dust from the blasted plain
Burnt like lava in every vein;
But I rode on with steady rein
Though the fierce sand-devils spun.

Then to a sullen land we came,
Whose earth was brass, whose sky was flame;
I made it balm with her blessed name
In the land of Mexico.

With gasp and groan my poor horse fell,--
Last of all things that loved me well!
I turned my head--a smoking shell

Veiled me his dying throes.

But fast on vengeful foot was I;

His steed fell, too, and was left to die;

He fled where a river's channel dry

Made way to the rolling stream.

Red as my rage the huge sun sank.

My foe bent low on the river's bank

And deep of the kindly flood he drank

While the giant stars broke forth.

Then face to face and man to man

I fought him where the river ran,

While the trembling palm held up its fan

And the emerald serpents lay.

The mad, remorseless bullets broke

From tongues of flame in the sulphur smoke;

The air was rent till the desert spoke

To the echoing hills afar.

Hot from his lips the curses burst;

He fell! The sands were slaked of thirst;

A stream in the stream ran dark at first,

And the stones grew red as hearts.

I shot him where the Rio flows;

I shot him when the moon arose;

And where he lies the vulture knows

Along the Tinto River.

But where she lies to none is known

Save to my poor heart and a lonely stone

On which I sit and weep alone

Where the cactus stars are white.

Where I shall lie, no man can say;

The flowers all are fallen away;

The desert is so drear and grey,

O Marta of Milrone!

Herman Scheffauer.

JACK DEMPSEY'S GRAVE

FAR out in the wilds of Oregon,

On a lonely mountain side,

Where Columbia's mighty waters

Roll down to the Ocean's tide;

Where the giant fir and cedar

Are imaged in the wave,

O'ergrown with ferns and lichens,

I found poor Dempsey's grave.

I found no marble monolith,

No broken shaft nor stone,

Recording sixty victories

This vanquished victor won;

No rose, no shamrock could I find,

No mortal here to tell

Where sleeps in this forsaken spot

The immortal Nonpareil.

A winding, wooded canyon road

That mortals seldom tread
Leads up this lonely mountain
To this desert of the dead.
And the western sun was sinking
In Pacific's golden wave;
And these solemn pines kept watching
Over poor Jack Dempsey's grave.

That man of honor and of iron,
That man of heart and steel,
That man who far out-classed his class
And made mankind to feel
That Dempsey's name and Dempsey's fame
Should live in serried stone,
Is now at rest far in the West
In the wilds of Oregon.

Forgotten by ten thousand throats
That thundered his acclaim--
Forgotten by his friends and foes
That cheered his very name;
Oblivion wraps his faded form,
But ages hence shall save
The memory of that Irish lad
That fills poor Dempsey's grave.

O Fame, why sleeps thy favored son
In wilds, in woods, in weeds?
And shall he ever thus sleep on--

Interred his valiant deeds?

'Tis strange New York should thus forget

Its "bravest of the brave,"

And in the wilds of Oregon

Unmarked, leave Dempsey's grave.

MacMahon.

THE CATTLE ROUND-UP

ONCE more are we met for a season of pleasure,

That shall smooth from our brows every furrow of care,

For the sake of old times shall we each tread a measure

And drink to the lees in the eyes of the fair.

Once more let the hand-clasp of years past be given;

Let us once more be boys and forget we are men;

Let friendships the chances of fortune have riven

Be renewed and the smiling past come back again.

The past, when the prairie was big and the cattle

Were as "scary" as ever the antelope grew--

When to carry a gun, to make our spurs rattle,

And to ride a blue streak was the most that we knew;

The past when we headed each year for Dodge City

And punched up the drags on the old Chisholm Trail;

When the world was all bright and the girls were all pretty,

And a feller could "mav'rick" and stay out of jail.

Then here's to the eyes that like diamonds are gleaming,

And make the lamps blush that their duties are o'er;

And here's to the lips where young love lies a-dreaming;

And here's to the feet light as air on the floor;

And here's to the memories--fun's sweetest sequel;

And here's to the night we shall ever recall;

And here's to the time--time shall know not its equal

When we danced the day in at the Cattlemen's Ball.

H. D. C. McLaclachlan.

PART II

THE COWBOY OFF GUARD

I am the plain, barren since time began.

Yet do I dream of motherhood, when man

One day at last shall look upon my charms

And give me towns, like children, for my arms.

A COWBOY'S WORRYING LOVE

I UST to read in the novel books 'bout fellers that got the prod

From an arrer shot from his hidin' place by the hand o' the Cupid god,

An' I'd laugh at the cussed chumps they was a-wastin' their breath in
sighs

An' goin' around with a locoed look a-campin' inside their eyes.

I've read o' the gals that broke 'em up a-sailin' in airy flight

On angel pinions above their beds as they dreamt o' the same at
night,

An' a sort o' disgusted frown'd bunch the wrinkles acrost my brow,

An' I'd call 'em a lot o' sissy boys--but I'm seein' it different now.

I got the jab in my rough ol' heart, an' I got it a-plenty, too,

A center shot from a pair o' eyes of the winninest sort o' blue,

An' I ride the ranges a-sighin' sighs, as cranky as a locoed steer--
A durned heap worse than the novel blokes that the narrative gals'd
queer.

Just hain't no energy left no mo', go 'round like a orphant calf
A-thinkin' about that sagehen's eyes that give me the Cupid gaff,
An' I'm all skeered up when I hit the thought some other rider might
Cut in ahead on a faster hoss an' rope her afore my sight.

There ain't a heifer that ever run in the feminine beauty herd
Could switch a tail on the whole durned range 'long-side o' that
little bird;
A figger plump as a prairy dog's that's feedin' on new spring grass,
An' as purty a face as was ever flashed in front of a lookin' glass.
She's got a smile that 'd raise the steam in the icyist sort o' heart,
A couple o' soul inspirin' eyes, an' the nose that keeps 'em apart
Is the cutest thing in the sassy line that ever occurred to act
As a ornament stuck on a purty face, an' that's a dead open fact.

I'm a-goin' to brace her by an' by to see if there's any hope,
To see if she's liable to shy when I'm ready to pitch the rope;
To see if she's goin' to make a stand, or fly like a skeered up dove
When I make a pass with the brandin' iron that's het in the fire o'
love.

I'll open the little home corral an' give her the level hunch
To make a run fur the open gate when I cut her out o' the bunch,
Fur there ain't no sense in a-jammin' round with a heart that's as
soft as dough

An' a-throwin' the breath o' life away bunched up into sighs.

Heigh-ho!

James Barton Adams.

THE COWBOY AND THE MAID

FUNNY how it come about!

Me and Texas Tom was out

Takin' of a moonlight walk,

Fillin' in the time with talk.

Every star up in the sky

Seemed to wink the other eye

At each other, 'sif they

Smelt a mouse around our way!

Me and Tom had never grew

Spoony like some couples do;

Never billed and cooed and sighed;

He was bashful like and I'd

Notions of my own that it

Wasn't policy to git

Too abundant till I'd got

Of my feller good and caught.

As we walked along that night

He got talkin' of the bright

Prospects that he had, and I

Somehow felt, I dunno why,

That a-fore we cake-walked back

To the ranch he'd make a crack

Fer my hand, and I was plum

Achin' fer the shock to come.

By and by he says, "I've got

Fifty head o' cows, and not

One of 'em but, on the dead,

Is a crackin' thoroughbred.

Got a daisy claim staked out,

And I'm thinkin' it's about

Time fer me to make a shy

At a home." "O Tom!" says I.

"Bin a-lookin' round," says he,

"Quite a little while to see

'F I could git a purty face

Fer to ornament the place.

Plenty of 'em in the land;

But the one 'at wears my brand

Must be sproutin' wings to fly!"

"You deserve her, Tom," says I.

"Only one so fur," says he,

"Fills the bill, and mebbe she

Might shy off and bust my hope

If I should pitch the poppin' rope.

Mebbe she'd git hot an' say

That it was a silly play

Askin' her to make a tie."

"She would be a fool," says I.

'Tain't nobody's business what

Happened then, but I jist thought
I could see the moon-man smile
Cutely down upon us, while
Me and him was walkin' back,--
Stoppin' now and then to smack
Lips rejoicin' that at last
The dread crisis had been past.

Anonymous.

A COWBOY'S LOVE SONG

OH, the last steer has been branded
And the last beef has been shipped,
And I'm free to roam the prairies
That the round-up crew has stripped;
I'm free to think of Susie,--
Fairer than the stars above,--
She's the waitress at the station
And she is my turtle dove.

Biscuit-shootin' Susie,--
She's got us roped and tied;
Sober men or woozy
Look on her with pride.
Susie's strong and able,
And not a one gits rash
When she waits on the table
And superintends the hash.

Oh, I sometimes think I'm locoed

An' jes fit fer herdin' sheep,
'Cause I only think of Susie
When I'm wakin' or I'm sleep.
I'm wearin' Cupid's hobbles,
An' I'm tied to Love's stake-pin,
And when my heart was branded
The irons sunk deep in.

Chorus:--

I take my saddle, Sundays,--
The one with inlaid flaps,--
And don my new sombrero
And my white angora chaps;
Then I take a bronc for Susie
And she leaves her pots and pans
And we figure out our future
And talk o'er our homestead plans.

Chorus:--

Anonymous.

A BORDER AFFAIR

SPANISH is the lovin' tongue,
Soft as music, light as spray;
'Twas a girl I learnt it from
Livin' down Sonora way.
I don't look much like a lover,
Yet I say her love-words over
Often, when I'm all alone--

"Mi amor, mi corazón."

Nights when she knew where I'd ride
She would listen for my spurs,
Throw the big door open wide,
Raise them laughin' eyes of hers,
And my heart would nigh stop beatin'
When I'd hear her tender greetin'
Whispered soft for me alone--

"Mi amor! mi corazón!"

Moonlight in the patio,
Old Señora noddin' near,
Me and Juana talkin' low
So the "madre" couldn't hear--
How those hours would go a-flyin',
And too soon I'd hear her sighin',
In her little sorry-tone--

"Adiós, mi corazón."

But one time I had to fly
For a foolish gamblin' fight,
And we said a swift good-bye
On that black, unlucky night.
When I'd loosed her arms from clingin',
With her words the hoofs kept ringin',
As I galloped north alone--

"Adiós, mi corazón."

Never seen her since that night;

I kaint cross the Line, you know.

She was Mex. and I was white;

Like as not it's better so.

Yet I've always sort of missed her

Since that last, wild night I kissed her,

Left her heart and lost my own--

"Adiós, mi corazón."

Charles B. Clark, Jr.

SNAGTOOTH SAL

I WAS young and happy and my heart was light and gay,

Singin', always singin' through the sunny summer day;

Happy as a lizard in the wavin' chaparral,

Walkin' down through Laramie with Snagtooth Sal.

Sal, Sal,

My heart is broke today--

Broke in two forever when they laid you in the clay;

I would give creation to be walkin' with my gal--

Walkin' down through Laramie with Snagtooth Sal.

Bury me tomorrow where the lily blossoms spring

Underneath the willows where the little robins sing.

You will yearn to see me--but ah, nevermore you shall--

Walkin' down through Laramie with Snagtooth Sal.

Refrain:--

Plant a little stone above the little mound of sod;

Write: "Here lies a lovin' an' a busted heart, begod!

Nevermore you'll see him walkin' proudly with his gal--

Walkin' down through Laramie with Snagtooth Sal."

Sal, Sal,

My heart is broke today--

Broke in two forever when they laid you in the clay;

I would give creation to be walkin' with my gal--

Walkin' down through Laramie with Snagtooth Sal.

Lowell O. Reese,

In the Saturday Evening Post.

LOVE LYRICS OF A COWBOY

IT hain't no use fer me to say

There's others with a style an' way

That beats hers to a fare-you-well,

Fer, on the square, I'm here to tell

I jes can't even start to see

But what she's perfect as kin be.

Fer any fault I finds excuse--

I'll tell you, pard, it hain't no use

Fer me to try to raise a hand,

When on my heart she's run her brand.

The bunk-house ain't the same to me;

The bunch jes makes me weary--Gee!

I never knew they was so coarse--

I warps my face to try to force

A smile at each old gag they spring;

Fer I'd heap ruther hear her sing

"Sweet Adeline," or softly play

The "Dream o' Heaven" that-a-way.

Besides this place, most anywhere

I'd ruther be--so she was there.

She called me "dear," an' do you know,

My heart jes skipped a beat, an' tho'

I'm hard to feaze, I'm free to yip

My reason nearly lost its grip.

She called me "dear," jes sweet an' slow,

An' lookin' down an' speakin' low;

An' if I had ten lives to live,

With everything the world could give,

I'd shake 'em all without one fear

If 'fore I'd go she'd call me "dear."

You wonders why I slicks up so

On Sundays, when I gits to go

To see her--well, I'm free to say

She's like religion that-a-way.

Jes sort o' like some holy thing,

As clean as young grass in the spring;

An' so before I rides to her

I looks my best from hat to spur--

But even then I hain't no right

To think I look good in her sight.

If she should pass me up--say, boy,

You jes put hobbles on your joy;

First thing you know, you gits so gay

Your luck stampedes and gits away.

An' don't you even start a guess

That you've a cinch on happiness;

Fer few e'er reach the Promised Land

If they starts headed by a band.

Ride slow an' quiet, humble, too,

Or Fate will slap its brand on you.

The old range sleeps, there hain't a stir.

Less it's a night-hawk's sudden whir,

Or cottonwoods a-whisperin while

The red moon smiles a lovin' smile.

An' there I set an' hold her hand

So glad I jes can't understand

The reason of it all, or see

Why all the world looks good to me;

Or why I sees in it heap more

Of beauty than I seen before.

Fool talk, perhaps, but it jes seems

We're ridin' through a range o' dreams;

Where medder larks the year round sing,

An' it's jes one eternal spring.

An' time--why time is gone--by gee!

There's no such thing as time to me

Until she says, "Here, boy, you know

You simply jes have got to go;

It's nearly twelve." I rides away,

"Dog-gone a clock!" is what I say.

R. V. Carr.

THE BULL FIGHT

THE couriers from Chihuahua go

To distant Cusi and Santavo,

Announce the feast of all the year the crown--

Se corren los toros!

And Juan brings his Pepita into town.

The rancherias on the mountain side,

The haciendas of the Llano wide,

Are quickened by the matador's renown.

Se corren los toros!

And Juan brings his Pepita into town.

The women that on ambling burros ride,

The men that trudge behind or close beside

Make groups of dazzling red and white and brown.

Se corren los toros!

And Juan brings his Pepita into town.

Or else the lumbering carts are brought in play,

That jolt and scream and groan along the way,

But to their happy tenants cause no frown.

Se corren los toros!

And Juan brings his Pepita into town.

The Plaza De Los Toros offers seats,

Some deep in shade, on some the fierce sun beats;

These for the don, those for the rustic clown.

Se corren los toros!

And Juan brings his Pepita into town.

Pepita sits, so young and sweet and fresh,

The sun shines on her hair's dusky mesh.

Her day of days, how soon it will be flown!

Se corren los toros!

And Juan's brought his Pepita into town.

The bull is harried till the governor's word

Bids the Diestro give the agile sword;

Then shower the bravos and the roses down!

'Sta muerto el toro!

And Juan takes his Pepita back from the town.

L. Worthington Green.

THE COWBOY'S VALENTINE

SAY, Moll, now don't you 'llo to quit

A-playin' maverick?

Sech stock should be corralled a bit

An' hev a mark 't 'll stick.

Old Val's a-roundin'-up today

Upon the Sweetheart Range,

'N me a-helpin', so to say,

Though this yere herd is strange

To me--'n yit, ef I c'd rope

Jes *one* to wear my brand

I'd strike f'r Home Ranch on a lope,

The happiest in the land.

Yo' savvy who I'm runnin' so,
Yo' savvy who I be;
Now, can't yo' take that brand--yo' know,--
The [Symbol: Heart] M-I-N-E.

C. F. Lummis.

A COWBOY'S HOPELESS LOVE

I'VE heard that story oftentimes about that little chap
A-cryin' for the shiney moon to fall into his lap,
An' jes a-raisin' merry hell because he couldn't git
The same to swing down low so's he could nab a-holt of it,
An' I'm a-feelin' that-a-way, locoed I reckon, wuss
Than that same kid, though maybe not a-makin' sich a fuss,--
A-goin' round with achin' eyes a-hankerin' fer a peach
That's hangin' on the beauty tree, too high fer me to reach.

I'm jes a rider of the range, plumb rough an' on-refined,
An' wild an' keerless in my ways, like others of my kind;
A reckless cuss in leather chaps, an' tanned an' blackened so
You'd think I wuz a Greaser from the plains of Mexico.
I never learnt to say a prayer, an' guess my style o' talk,
If fired off in a Sunday School would give 'em all a shock;
An' yet I got a-mopin' round as crazy as a loon
An' actin' like the story kid that bellered fer the moon.

I wish to God she'd never come with them bright laughin' eyes,--
Had never flashed that smile that seems a sunburst from the skies,--
Had stayed there in her city home instead o' comin' here
To visit at the ranch an' knock my heart plumb out o' gear.

I wish to God she'd talk to me in a way to fit the case,--
In words t'd have a tendency to hold me in my place,--
Instead o' bein' sociable an' actin' like she thought
Us cowboys good as city gents in clothes that's tailor bought.

If I would hint to her o' love, she'd hit that love a jar
An' laugh at sich a tough as me a-tryin' to rope a star;
She'd give them fluffy skirts a flirt, an' skate out o' my sight,
An' leave me paralyzed,--an' it'd serve me cussed right.
I wish she'd pack her pile o' trunks an' hit the city track,
An' maybe I'd recover from this violent attack;
An' in the future know enough to watch my feedin' ground
An' shun the loco weed o' love when there's an angel round.

James Barton Adams.

THE CHASE

HERE'S a moccasin track in the drifts,
It's no more than the length of my hand;
An' her instep,--just see how it lifts!
If that ain't the best in the land!
For the maid ran as free as the wind
And her foot was as light as the snow.
Why, as sure as I follow, I'll find
Me a kiss where her red blushes grow.

Here's two small little feet and a skirt;
Here's a soft little heart all aglow.
See me trail down the dear little flirt
By the sign that she left in the snow!

Did she run? 'Twas a sign to make haste.

An' why bless her! I'm sure she won't mind.

If she's got any kisses to waste,

Why, she knew that a man was behind.

Did she run 'cause she's only afraid?

No! For sure 'twas to set me the pace!

An' I'll follow in love with a maid

When I ain't had a sight of her face.

There she is! An' I knew she was near.

Will she pay me a kiss to be free?

Will she hate? Will she love? Will she fear?

Why, the darling! She's waiting to see!

Pocock in "Curley."

RIDING SONG

LET us ride together,--

Blowing mane and hair,

Careless of the weather,

Miles ahead of care,

Ring of hoof and snaffle,

Swing of waist and hip,

Trotting down the twisted road

With the world let slip.

Let us laugh together,--

Merry as of old

To the creak of leather

And the morning cold.

Break into a canter;
Shout to bank and tree;
Rocking down the waking trail,
Steady hand and knee.

Take the life of cities,--
Here's the life for me.
'Twere a thousand pities
Not to gallop free.
So we'll ride together,
Comrade, you and I,
Careless of the weather,
Letting care go by.

Anonymous.

OUR LITTLE COWGIRL

THAR she goes a-lopin', stranger,
Khaki-gowned, with flyin' hair,
Talk about your classy ridin',--
Wal, you're gettin' it right thar.
Jest a kid, but lemme tell you
When she warms a saddle seat
On that outlaw bronc a-straddle
She is one that can't be beat!

Every buckaroo that sees her
Tearin' cross the range astride
Has some mighty jealous feelin's
Wishin' he knowed how to ride.

Why, she'll take a deep barranca
Six-foot wide and never peep;
That 'ere cayuse she's a-forkin'
Sure's somethin' on the leap.

Ride? Why, she can cut a critter
From the herd as neat as pie,
Read a brand out on the ranges
Just as well as you or I.
Ain't much yet with the riata,
But you give her a few years
And no puncher with the outfit
Will beat her a-ropin' steers.

Proud o' her? Say, lemme tell you,
She's the queen of all the range;
Got a grip upon our heart-strings
Mighty strong, but that ain't strange;
'Cause she loves the lowin' cattle,
Loves the hills and open air,
Dusty trails on blossomed canons
God has strung around out here.

Hoof-beats poundin' down the mesa,
Chicken-time in lively tune,
Jest below the trail to Keeber's,--
Wait, you'll see her pretty soon.
You kin bet I know that ridin',--
Now she's toppin' yonder swell.

Thar she is; that's her a-smilin'

At the bars of the corral.

Anonymous.

I WANT MY TIME

I'M night guard all alone tonight,

Dead homesick, lonely, tired and blue;

And none but you can make it right;

My heart is hungry, Girl, for you.

I've longed all night to hug you, Dear;

To speak my love I'm at a loss.

But just as soon as daylight's here

I'm goin' straight to see the boss.

"How long's the round-up goin' to run?

Another week, or maybe three?

Give me my time, then, I am done.

No, I'm not sick. Three weeks? Oh gee!"

I know, though, when I've had enough.

I will not work,--darned if I will.

I'm goin' to quit, and that's no bluff.

Say, gimme some tobacco, Bill.

Anonymous.

WHO'S THAT CALLING SO SWEET?

THE herds are gathered in from plain and hill,

Who's that a-calling?

The boys are sleeping and the boys are still,

Who's that a-calling?

'Twas the wind a-sighing in the prairie grass,

Who's that a-calling?

Or wild birds singing overhead as they pass.

Who's that a-calling?

Making heart and pulse to beat.

No, no, it wasn't earthly sound I heard,

Who's that a-calling?

It was no sigh of breeze or song of bird,

Who's that a-calling?

For the tone I heard was softer far than these,

that a-calling?

'Twas loved ones' voices from far off across the seas

Deveen.

SONG OF THE CATTLE TRAIL

THE dust hangs thick upon the trail

And the horns and the hoofs are clashing,

While off at the side through the chaparral

The men and the strays go crashing;

But in right good cheer the cowboy sings,

For the work of the fall is ending,

And then it's ride for the old home ranch

Where a maid love's light is tending.

Then it's crack! crack! crack!

On the beef steer's back,

And it's run, you slow-foot devil;

For I'm soon to turn back where through the black

Love's lamp gleams along the level.

He's trailed them far o'er the trackless range,

Has this knight of the saddle leather;

He has risked his life in the mad stampede,

And has breasted all kinds of weather.

But now is the end of the trail in sight,

And the hours on wings are sliding;

For it's back to the home and the only girl

When the foreman O K's the option.

Then it's quirt! quirt! quirt!

And it's run or git hurt,

You hang-back, bawling critter.

For a man who's in love with a turtle dove

Ain't got no time to fritter.

Anonymous.

A COWBOY'S SON

WHAR y'u from, little stranger, little boy?

Y'u was ridin' a cloud on that star-strewn plain,

But y'u fell from the skies like a drop of rain

To this world of sorrow and long, long pain.

Will y'u care fo' yo' mothah, little boy?

When y'u grows, little varmint, little boy,

Y'u'll be ridin' a hoss by yo' fathah's side

With yo' gun and yo' spurs and yo' howstrong pride.

Will y'u think of yo' home when the world rolls wide?

Will y'u wish for yo' mothah, little boy?

When y'u love in yo' manhood, little boy,--
When y'u dream of a girl who is angel fair,--
When the stars are her eyes and the wind is her hair,--
When the sun is her smile and yo' heaven's there,--
Will y'u care for yo' mothah, little boy?

Pocock in "Curley."

A COWBOY SONG

I COULD not be so well content,
So sure of thee,
Señorita,
But well I know you must relent
And come to me,
Lolita!

The Caballeros throng to see
Thy laughing face,
Señorita,
Lolita.
But well I know thy heart's for me,
Thy charm, thy grace,
Lolita!

I ride the range for thy dear sake,
To earn thee gold,
Señorita,
Lolita;
And steal the gringo's cows to make
A ranch to hold

Lolita!

Pocock in "Curley."

A NEVADA COWPUNCHER TO HIS BELOVED

LONESOME? Well, I guess so!

This place is mighty blue;

The silence of the empty rooms

Jes' palpitates with--you.

The day has lost its beauty,

The sun's a-shinin' pale;

I'll round up my belongin's

An' I guess I'll hit the trail.

Out there in the sage-brush

A-harkin' to the "Coo-oo"

Of the wild dove in his matin'

I can think alone of you.

Perhaps a gaunt coyote

Will go a-lopin' by

An' linger on the mountain ridge

An' cock his wary eye.

An' when the evenin' settles,

A-waitin' for the dawn

Perhaps I'll hear the ground owl:

"She's gone--she's gone--she's gone!"

Anonymous.

THE COWBOY TO HIS FRIEND IN NEED

YOU'RE very well polished, I'm free to confess,

Well balanced, well rounded, a power for right;
But cool and collected,--no steel could be less;
You're primed for continual fight.

Your voice is a bellicose bark of ill-will,
On hatred and choler you seem to have fed;
But when I control you, your temper is nil;
In fact, you're most easily led.

Though lead is your diet and fight is your fun,
I simply can't give you the jolt;
For I love you, you blessed old son-of-a-gun,--
You forty-five caliber Colt!

Burke Jenkins.

WHEN BOB GOT THROWN

THAT time when Bob got throwed
I thought I sure would bust.
I like to died a-laffin'
To see him chewin' dust.

He crawled on that Andy bronc
And hit him with a quirt.
The next thing that he knew
He was wallowin' in the dirt.

Yes, it might a-killed him,
I heard the old ground pop;
But to see if he was injured
You bet I didn't stop.

I just rolled on the ground

And began to kick and yell;

It like to tickled me to death

To see how hard he fell.

'Twarn't more than a week ago

That I myself got throwed,

(But 'twas from a meaner horse

Than old Bob ever rode).

D'you reckon Bob looked sad and said,

"I hope that you ain't hurt!"

Naw! He just laffed and laffed and laffed

To see me chewin' dirt.

I've been prayin' ever since

For his horse to turn his pack;

And when he done it, I'd a laffed

If it had broke his back.

So I was still a-howlin'

When Bob, he got up lame;

He seen his horse had run clean off

And so for me he came.

He first chucked sand into my eyes,

With a rock he rubbed my head,

Then he twisted both my arms,--

"Now go fetch that horse," he said.

So I went and fetched him back,

But I was feelin' good all day;

For I sure enough do love to see

A feller get throwed that way.

Ray.

COWBOY VERSUS BRONCHO

HAVEN'T got no special likin' fur the toney sorts o' play,

Chasin' foxes or that hossback polo game,

Jumpin' critters over hurdles--sort o' things that any jay

Could accomplish an' regard as rather tame.

None o' them is worth a mention, to my thinkin' p'int o' view,

Which the same I hold correct without a doubt,

As a-toppin' of a broncho that has got it in fur you

An' concludes that's just the time to have it out.

Don't no sooner hit the saddle than the exercises start,

An' they're lackin' in perliminary fuss;

You kin hear his j'int's a-crackin' like he's breakin' 'em apart,

An' the hide jes' seems a-rippin' off the cuss,

An' you sometimes git a joltin' that makes everything turn blue,

An' you want to strictly mind what you're about,

When you're fightin' with a broncho that has got it in fur you

An' imagines that's the time to have it out.

Bows his back when he is risin', sticks his nose between his knees,

An' he shakes hisself while a-hangin' in the air;

Then he hits the earth so solid that it somewhat disagrees

With the usual peace an' quiet of your hair.

You imagine that your innards are a-gittin' all askew,

An' your spine don't feel so cussed firm an' stout,

When you're up agin a broncho that has got it in fur you

Doin' of his level best to have it out.

He will rise to the occasion with a lightnin' jump, an' then

When he hits the face o' these United States

Doesn't linger half a second till he's in the air agin--

Occupies the earth an' then evacuates.

Isn't any sense o' comfort like a-settin' in a pew

Listenin' to hear a sleepy parson spout

When you're up on top a broncho that has got it in fur you

An' is desputly a-tryin' to have it out.

Always feel a touch o' pity when he has to give it up

After makin' sich a well intentioned buck

An' is standin' broken hearted an' as gentle as a pup

A reflectin' on the rottenness o' luck.

Puts your sympathetic feelin's, as you might say, in a stew,

Though you're lame as if a-sufferin' from the gout,

When you're lightin' off a broncho that has had it in fur you

An' mistook the proper time to have it out.

James Barton Adams.

WHEN YOU'RE THROWN

IF a feller's been a-straddle

Since he's big enough to ride,

And has had to sling his saddle

On most any colored hide,--

Though it's nothin' they take pride in,

Still most fellers I have knowed,

If they ever done much ridin',

Has at different times got thrown.

All the boys start out together

For the round-up some fine day

When you're due to throw your leather

On a little wall-eyed bay,

An' he swells to beat the nation

When you're cinchin' up the slack,

An' he keeps an elevation

In your saddle at the back.

He stands still with feet a-sprawlin',

An' his eye shows lots of white,

An' he kinks his spinal column,

An' his hide is puckered tight,

He starts risin' an' a-jumpin',

An' he strikes when you get near,

An' you cuss him an' you thump him

Till you get him by the ear,--

Then your right hand grabs the saddle

An' you ketch your stirrup, too,

An' you try to light a-straddle

Like a woolly buckaroo;

But he drops his head an' switches,

Then he makes a backward jump,

Out of reach your stirrup twitches

But your right spur grabs his hump.

An' "Stay with him!" shouts some feller;

Though you know it's hope forlorn,

Yet you'll show that you ain't yeller

An' you choke the saddle horn.

Then you feel one rein a-droppin'

An' you know he's got his head;

An' your shirt tail's out an' floppin';

An' the saddle pulls like lead.

Then the boys all yell together

Fit to make a feller sick:

"Hey, you short horn, drop the leather!

Fan his fat an' ride him slick!"

Seems you're up-side-down an' flyin';

Then your spurs begin to slip.

There's no further use in tryin',

For the horn flies from your grip,

An' you feel a vague sensation

As upon the ground you roll,

Like a violent separation

'Twixt your body an' your soul.

Then you roll agin a hummock

Where you lay an' gasp for breath,

An' there's somethin' grips your stomach

Like the finger-grips o' death.

They all offers you prescriptions

For the grip an' for the croup,

An' they give you plain descriptions

How you looped the spiral loop;
They all swear you beat a circus
Or a hoochy-koochy dance,
Moppin' up the canon's surface
With the bosom of your pants.

Then you'll get up on your trotters,
But you have a job to stand;
For the landscape round you totters
An' your collar's full o' sand.
Lots of fellers give prescriptions
How a broncho should be rode,
But there's few that gives descriptions
Of the times when they got throwed.

Anonymous.

PARDNERS

YOU bad-eyed, tough-mouthed son-of-a-gun,
Ye're a hard little beast to break,
But ye're good for the fiercest kind of a run
An' ye're quick as a rattlesnake.
Ye jolted me good when we first met
In the dust of that bare corral,
An' neither one of us will forget
The fight we fit, old pal.

But now--well, say, old hoss, if John
D. Rockefeller shud come
With all the riches his paws are on

And want to buy you, you bum,
I'd laugh in his face an' pat your neck
An' say to him loud an' strong:
"I wouldn't sell you this derved old wreck
For all your wealth--so long!"

For we have slept on the barren plains
An' cuddled against the cold;
We've been through tempests of drivin' rains
When the heaviest thunder rolled;
We've raced from fire on the lone prairie
An' run from the mad stampede;
An' there ain't no money could buy from me
A pard of your style an' breed.

So I reckon we'll stick together, pard,
Till one of us cashes in;
Ye're wirey an' tough an' mighty hard,
An' homlier, too, than sin.
But yer head's all there an' yer heart's all right,
An' you've been a good pardner, too,
An' if ye've a soul it's clean an' white,
You ugly ol' scoundrel, you!

Berton Braley.

THE BRONC THAT WOULDN'T BUST

I'VE busted bronchos off and on
Since first I struck their trail,
And you bet I savvy bronchos

From nostrils down to tail;
But I struck one on Powder River,
And say, hands, he was the first
And only living broncho
That your servant couldn't burst.

He was a no-count buckskin,
Wasn't worth two-bits to keep,
Had a black stripe down his backbone,
And was woolly like a sheep.
That hoss wasn't built to tread the earth;
He took natural to the air;
And every time he went aloft
He tried to leave me there.

He went so high above the earth
Lights from Jerusalem shone.
Right thar we parted company
And he came down alone.
I hit terra firma,
The buckskin's heels struck free,
And brought a bunch of stars along
To dance in front of me.

I'm not a-riding airships
Nor an electric flying beast;
Ain't got no rich relation
A-waitin' me back East;
So I'll sell my chaps and saddle,

My spurs can lay and rust;

For there's now and then a digger

That a buster cannot bust.

Anonymous.

THE OL' COW HAWSE

WHEN it comes to saddle hawses, there's a difference in steeds:

There is fancy-gaited critters that will suit some feller's needs;

There is nags high-bred an' tony, with a smooth an' shiny skin,

That will capture all the races that you want to run 'em in.

But fer one that never tires; one that's faithful, tried and true;

One that allus is a "stayer" when you want to slam him through,

There is but one breed o' critters that I ever came across

That will allus stand the racket: 'tis the

Ol'

Cow

Hawse

No, he ain't so much fer beauty, fer he's scrubby an' he's rough,

An' his temper's sort o' sassy, but you bet he's good enough!

Fer he'll take the trail o' mornin's, be it up or be it down,

On the range a-huntin' cattle or a-lopin' into town,

An' he'll leave the miles behind him, an' he'll never sweat a hair,

'Cuz he's a willin' critter when he's goin' anywhere.

Oh, your thoroughbred at runnin' in a race may be the boss,

But fer all day ridin' lemme have the

Ol'

Cow

Hawse!

When my soul seeks peace and quiet on the home ranch of the blest,

Where no storms or stampedes bother, an' the trails are trails o'
rest,

When my brand has been inspected an' pronounced to be O K,

An' the boss has looked me over an' has told me I kin stay,

Oh, I'm hopin' when I'm lopin' off across that blessed range

That I won't be in a saddle on a critter new an' strange,

But I'm prayin' every minnit that up there I'll ride across

That big heaven range o' glory on an

O!

Cow

Hawse

E. A. Brinninstool.

THE BUNK-HOUSE ORCHESTRA

WRANGLE up your mouth-harps, drag your banjo out,

Tune your old guitarra till she twangs right stout,

For the snow is on the mountains and the wind is on the plain,

But we'll cut the chimney's moanin' with a livelier refrain.

Shinin' dobe fire-place, shadows on the wall

(See old Shorty's friv'lous toes a-twitchin' at the call:)

It's the best grand high that there is within the law

When seven jolly punchers tackle "Turkey in the Straw."

Freezy was the day's ride, lengthy was the trail,

Ev'ry steer was haughty with a high-arched tail,

But we held 'em and we shoved 'em for our longin' hearts were tried

By a yearnin' for tobaccer and our dear fireside.

Swing 'er into stop-time, don't you let 'er droop

(You're about as tuneeful as a coyote with the croup!)

Ay, the cold wind bit when we drifted down the draw,

But we drifted on to comfort and to "Turkey in the Straw."

Snarlin' when the rain whipped, cussin' at the ford--

Ev'ry mile of twenty was a long discord,

But the night is brimmin' music and its glory is complete

When the eye is razzle-dazzled by the flip o' Shorty's feet!

Snappy for the dance, now, till she up and shoots!

(Don't he beat the devil's wife for jiggin' in his boots?)

Shorty got throwed high and we laughed till he was raw,

But tonight he's done forgot it prancin' "Turkey in the Straw."

Rainy dark or firelight, bacon rind or pie,

Livin' is a luxury that don't come high;

Oh, be happy and onruly while our years and luck allow,

For we all must die or marry less than forty years from now!

Lively on the last turn! Lope'er to the death!

(Reddy's soul is willin' but he's gettin' short o' breath.)

Ay, the storm wind sings and old trouble sucks his paw

When we have an hour of firelight set to "Turkey in the Straw."

Charles Badger Clark.

THE COWBOY'S DANCE SONG

YOU can't expect a cowboy to agitate his shanks

In etiquettish manner in aristocratic ranks

When he's always been accustomed to shake the heel and toe

At the rattling rancher dances where much etiquette don't go.
You can bet I set them laughing in quite an excited way,
A-giving of their squinters an astonished sort of play,
When I happened into Denver and was asked to take a prance
In the smooth and easy mazes of a high-toned dance.

When I got among the ladies in their frocks of fleecy white,
And the dudes togged out in wrappings that were simply out of sight,
Tell you what, I was embarrassed, and somehow I couldn't keep
From feeling like a burro in a pretty flock of sheep.
Every step I made was awkward and I blushed a fiery red
Like the principal adornment of a turkey gobbler's head.
The ladies said 'twas seldom that they had had the chance
To see an old-time puncher at a high-toned dance.

I cut me out a heifer from a bunch of pretty girls
And yanked her to the center to dance the dreamy whirls.
She laid her head upon my bosom in a loving sort of way
And we drifted into heaven as the band began to play.
I could feel my neck a-burning from her nose's breathing heat,
And she do-ce-doe'd around me, half the time upon my feet;
She peered up in my blinkers with a soul-dissolving glance
Quite conducive to the pleasures of a high-toned dance.

Every nerve just got a-dancing to the music of delight
As I hugged the little sagehen uncomfortably tight;
But she never made a bellow and the glances of her eyes
Seemed to thank me for the pleasure of a genuine surprise.
She snuggled up against me in a loving sort of way,

And I hugged her all the tighter for her trustifying play,--
 Tell you what the joys of heaven ain't a cussed circumstance
 To the hug-a-mania pleasures of a high-toned dance.

When they struck the old cotillion on the music bill of fare,
 Every bit of devil in me seemed to burst out on a tear.
 I fetched a cowboy whoop and started in to rag,
 And cut her with my trotters till the floor began to sag;
 Swung my pardner till she got sea-sick and rushed for a seat;
 I balanced to the next one but she dodged me slick and neat.--
 Tell you what, I shook the creases from my go-to-meeting pants
 When I put the cowboy trimmings on that high-toned dance.

James Barton Adams.

THE COWBOYS' CHRISTMAS BALL

WAY out in Western Texas, where the Clear Fork's waters flow,
 Where the cattle are "a-browzin'" and the Spanish ponies grow;
 Where the Norther "comes a-whistlin'" from beyond the Neutral strip
 And the prairie dogs are sneezin', as if they had "the Grip";
 Where the coyotes come a-howlin' round the ranches after dark,
 And the mocking-birds are singin' to the lovely "medder lark";
 Where the 'possum and the badger, and rattle-snakes abound,
 And the monstrous stars are winkin' o'er a wilderness profound;
 Where lonesome, tawny prairies melt into airy streams,
 While the Double Mountains slumber in heavenly kinds of dreams;
 Where the antelope is grazin' and the lonely plovers call--
 It was there that I attended "The Cowboys' Christmas Ball."

The town was Anson City, old Jones's county seat,

Where they raise Polled Angus cattle, and waving whiskered wheat;
Where the air is soft and "bammy," an' dry an' full of health,
And the prairies is explodin' with agricultural wealth;
Where they print the *Texas Western*, that Hec. McCann supplies,
With news and yarns and stories, of most amazin' size;
Where Frank Smith "pulls the badger," on knowin' tender feet,
And Democracy's triumphant, and mighty hard to beat;
Where lives that good old hunter, John Milsap from Lamar,
Who "used to be the sheriff, back East, in Paris, sah!"
'Twas there, I say, at Anson, with the lively "Widder Wall,"
That I went to that reception, "The Cowboys' Christmas Ball."

The boys had left the ranches and come to town in piles;
The ladies--"kinder scatterin'"--had gathered in for miles.
And yet the place was crowded, as I remember well,
'Twas got for the occasion at "The Morning Star Hotel."
The music was a fiddle and a lively tambourine,
And a "viol come imported," by stage from Abilene.
The room was togged out gorgeous--with mistletoe and shawls,
And candles flickered frescoes around the airy walls.
The "wimmin folks" looked lovely--the boys looked kinder treed,
Till their leader commenced yellin': "Whoa, fellers, let's stampede."
The music started sighin' and a-wailin' through the hall,
As a kind of introduction to "The Cowboys' Christmas Ball."

The leader was a fellow that came from Swenson's Ranch,
They called him "Windy Billy," from "little Dead-man's Branch."
His rig was "kinder keerless," big spurs and high-heeled boots;

He had the reputation that comes when "fellers shoots."
His voice was like the bugle upon the mountain's height;
His feet were animated, an' a *mighty movin' sight*,
When he commenced to holler, "Neow, fellers, stake yer pen!
Lock horns to all them heifers, an' russle 'em like men.
Saloot yer lovely critters; neow swing an' let 'em go,
Climb the grape vine round 'em--all hands do-ce-do!
And Mavericks, jine the round-up--Jest skip her waterfall,"
Huh! hit wuz gittin' happy, "The Cowboys' Christmas Ball!"

The boys were tolerable skittish, the ladies powerful neat,
That old bass viol's music *just got there with both feet*.
That wailin' frisky fiddle, I never shall forget;
And Windy kept a singin'--I think I hear him yet--
"O Xes, chase your squirrels, an' cut 'em to one side,
Spur Treadwell to the center, with Cross P Charley's bride,
Doc. Hollis down the middle, an' twine the ladies' chain,
Varn Andrews pen the fillies in big T. Diamond's train.
All pull yer freight tergether, neow swallow fork an' change,
'Big Boston' lead the trail herd, through little Pitchfork's range.
Purr round yer gentle pussies, neow rope 'em! Balance all!"
Huh! hit wuz gittin' active--"The Cowboys' Christmas Ball!"

The dust riz fast an' furious, we all just galloped round,
Till the scenery got so giddy, that Z Bar Dick was downed.
We buckled to our partners, an' told 'em to hold on,
Then shook our hoofs like lightning until the early dawn.
Don't tell me 'bout cotillions, or germans. No sir 'ee!

That whirl at Anson City just takes the cake with me.
I'm sick of lazy shufflin's, of them I've had my fill,
Give me a fronteer breakdown, backed up by Windy Bill.
McAllister ain't nowhere! when Windy leads the show,
I've seen 'em both in harness, an' so I sorter know--
Oh, Bill, I sha'n't forget yer, and I'll oftentimes recall,
That lively-gaited sworray--"The Cowboys' Christmas Ball."

Larry Chittenden in "Ranch Verses."

A DANCE AT THE RANCH

FROM every point they gaily come, the broncho's unshod feet
Pat at the green sod of the range with quick, emphatic beat;
The tresses of the buxom girls as banners stream behind--
Like silken, castigating whips cut at the sweeping wind.
The dashing cowboys, brown of face, sit in their saddle thrones
And sing the wild songs of the range in free, uncultured tones,
Or ride beside the pretty girls, like gallant cavaliers,
And pour the usual fairy tales into their list'ning ears.
Within the "best room" of the ranch the jolly gathered throng
Buzz like a hive of human bees and lade the air with song;
The maidens tap their sweetest smiles and give their tongues full rein
In efforts to entrap the boys in admiration's chain.
The fiddler tunes the strings with pick of thumb and scrape of bow,
Finds one string keyed a note too high, another one too low;
Then rosins up the tight-drawn hairs, the young folks in a fret
Until their ears are greeted with the warning words, "All set!
S'lute yer pardners! Let 'er go!

Balance all an' do-ce-do!

Swing yer girls an' run away!

Right an' left an' gents sashay!

Gents to right an' swing or cheat!

On to next gal an' repeat!

Balance next an' don't be shy!

Swing yer pard an' swing 'er high!

Bunch the gals an' circle round!

Whack yer feet until they bound!

Form a basket! Break away!

Swing an' kiss an' all git gay!

Al'man left an' balance all!

Lift yer hoofs an' let 'em fall!

Swing yer op'sites! Swing agin!

Kiss the sagehens if you kin!"

An' thus the merry dance went on till morning's struggling light

In lengthening streaks of grey breaks down the barriers of the night,

And broncs are mounted in the glow of early morning skies

By weary-limbed young revelers with drooping, sleepy eyes.

The cowboys to the ranges speed to "work" the lowing herds,

The girls within their chambers hide their sleep like weary birds,

And for a week the young folks talk of what a jolly spree

They had that night at Jackson's ranch down on the Owyhee.

Anonymous.

AT A COWBOY DANCE

GIT yo' little sagehens ready;

Trot 'em out upon the floor--

Line up there, you critters! Steady!

Lively, now! One couple more.

Shorty, shed that ol' sombrero;

Broncho, douse that cigaret;

Stop yer cussin', Casimero,

'Fore the ladies. Now, all set:

S'lute yer ladies, all together;

Ladies opposite the same;

Hit the lumber with yer leather;

Balance all an' swing yer dame;

Bunch the heifers in the middle;

Circle stags an' do-ce-do;

Keep a-steppin' to the fiddle;

Swing 'em 'round an' off you go.

First four forward. Back to places.

Second foller. Shuffle back--

Now you've got it down to cases--

Swing 'em till their trotters crack.

Gents all right a-heel an' toein';

Swing 'em--kiss 'em if yo' kin--

On to next an' keep a-goin'

Till yo' hit yer pards agin.

Gents to center. Ladies 'round 'em;

Form a basket; balance all;

Swing yer sweets to where yo' found 'em;

All p'mnade around the hall.

Balance to yer pards an' trot 'em

'Round the circle double quick;

Grab an' squeeze 'em while you've got 'em--

Hold 'em to it if they kick.

Ladies, left hand to yer sonnies;

Alaman; grand right an' left;

Balance all an' swing yer honies--

Pick 'em up an' feel their heft.

All p'mnade like skeery cattle;

Balance all an' swing yer sweets;

Shake yer spurs an' make 'em rattle--

Keno! Promenade to seats.

James Barton Adams.

THE COWBOYS' BALL

YIP! Yip! Yip! Yip! tunin' up the fiddle;

You an' take yo'r pardner there, standin' by the wall!

Say "How!" make a bow, and sashay down the middle;

Shake yo'r leg lively at the Cowboys' Ball.

Big feet, little feet, all the feet a-clickin';

Everybody happy an' the goose a-hangin' high;

Lope, trot, hit the spot, like a colt a-kickin';

Keep a-stompin' leather while you got one eye.

Yah! Hoo! Larry! would you watch his wings a-floppin'

Jumpin' like a chicken that's a-lookin' for its head;

Hi! Yip! Never slip, and never think of stoppin',

Just keep yo'r feet a-movin' till we all drop dead!

High heels, low heels, moccasins and slippers;

Real old rally round the dipper and the keg!

Uncle Ed's gettin' red--had too many dippers;

Better get him hobbled or he'll break his leg!

Yip! Yip! Yip! Yip! tunin' up the fiddle;

Pass him up another for his arm is gettin' slow.

Bow down! right in town--and sashay down the middle;

Got to keep a-movin' for to see the show!

Yes, mam! Warm, mam? Want to rest a minute?

Like to get a breath of air lookin' at the stars?

All right! Fine night--Dance? There's nothin' in it!

That's my pony there, peekin' through the bars.

Bronc, mam? No, mam! Gentle as a kitten!

Here, boy! Shake a hand! Now, mam, you can see;

Night's cool. What a fool to dance, instead of sittin'

Like a gent and lady, same as you and me.

Yip! Yip! Yip! Yip! tunin' up the fiddle;

Well, them as likes the exercise sure can have it all!

Right wing, lady swings, and sashay down the middle...

But this beats dancin' at the Cowboys' Ball.

Henry Herbert Knibbs.

PART III

COWBOY TYPES

DOWN where the Rio Grande ripples--

When there's water in its bed;

Where no man is ever drunken--

All prefer mescal instead;

Where no lie is ever uttered--

There being nothin' one can trade;

Where no marriage vows are broken

'Cause the same are never made.

THE COWBOY

HE wears a big hat and big spurs and all that,

And leggins of fancy fringed leather;

He takes pride in his boots and the pistol he shoots,

And he's happy in all kinds of weather;

He's fond of his horse, it's a broncho, of course,

For oh, he can ride like the devil;

He is old for his years and he always appears

Like a fellow who's lived on the level;

He can sing, he can cook, yet his eyes have the look

Of a man that to fear is a stranger;

Yes, his cool, quiet nerve will always subserve

For his wild life of duty and danger.

He gets little to eat, and he guys tenderfeet,

And for fashion, oh well! he's not in it;

He can rope a gay steer when he gets on its ear

At the rate of two-forty a minute;

His saddle's the best in the wild, woolly West,

Sometimes it will cost sixty dollars;

Ah, he knows all the tricks when he brands mavericks,
But his knowledge is not got from your scholars;
He is loyal as steel, but demands a square deal,
And he hates and despises a coward;
Yet the cowboy, you'll find, to women is kind
Though he'll fight till by death overpowered.
Hence I say unto you,--give the cowboy his due
And be kind, my friends, to his folly;
For he's generous and brave though he may not behave
Like your dudes, who are so melancholy.

Anonymous.

BAR-Z ON A SUNDAY NIGHT

WE ain't no saints on the Bar-Z ranch,
'Tis said--an' we know who 'tis--
"Th' devil's laid hold on us, tooth an' branch,
An' uses us in his biz."
Still, we ain't so bad but we might be wuss,
An' you'd sure admit that's right,
If you happened--an' unbeknown to us--
Around, of a Sunday night.

Th' week-day manners is stowed away,
Th' jokes an' the card games halts,
When Dick's ol' fiddle begins to play
A toon--an' it ain't no waltz.
It digs fer th' things that are out o' sight,
It delves through th' toughest crust,

It grips th' heart-strings, an' holds 'em tight,

Till we've got ter sing--er bust!

With pipin' treble the kid starts in,

An' Hell! how that kid kin sing!

"Yield not to temptation, fer yieldin' is sin,"

He leads, an' the rafters ring;

"Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,"

We shouts it with force an' vim;

"Look ever to Jesus, he'll carry you through,"--

That's puttin' it up to Him!

We ain't no saints on the ol' Bar-Z,

But many a time an' oft

When ol' fiddle's a-pleadin', "Abide with me,"

Our hearts gets kinder soft.

An' we makes some promises there an' then

Which we keeps--till we goes to bed,--

That's the most could be ast o' a passel o' men

What ain't no saints, as I said.

Percival Combes.

A COWBOY RACE

A PATTERNING rush like the rattle of hail

When the storm king's wild coursers are out on the trail,

A long roll of hoofs,--and the earth is a drum!

The centaurs! See! Over the prairies they come!

A rollicking, clattering, battering beat;

A rhythmical thunder of galloping feet;

A swift-swirling dust-cloud--a mad hurricane

Of swarthy, grim faces and tossing, black mane;

Hurrah! in the face of the steeds of the sun

The gauntlet is flung and the race is begun!

J. C. Davis.

THE HABIT

I'VE beat my way wherever any winds have blown;

I've bummed along from Portland down to San Antone;

From Sandy Hook to Frisco, over gulch and hill,--

For once you git the habit, why, you can't keep still.

I settled down quite frequent, and I says, says I,

"I'll never wander further till I come to die."

But the wind it sorter chuckles, "Why, o' course you will."

An' sure enough I does it 'cause I can't keep still.

I've seen a lot o' places where I'd like to stay,

But I gets a-feelin' restless an' I'm on my way.

I was never meant for settin' on my own door sill,

An', once you git the habit, why, you can't keep still.

I've been in rich men's houses an' I've been in jail,

But when it's time for leavin' I jes hits the trail.

I'm a human bird of passage and the song I trill

Is, "Once you git the habit, why, you can't keep still."

The sun is sorter coaxin' an' the road is clear,

An' the wind is singin' ballads that I got to hear.

It ain't no use to argue when you feel the thrill;

For, once you git the habit, why, you can't keep still.

Berton Braley.

A RANGER

HE never made parade of tooth or claw;
He was plain as us that nursed the bawlin' herds.
Though he had a rather meanin'-lookin' jaw,
He was shy of exercisin' it with words.
As a circus-ridin' preacher of the law,
All his preachin' was the sort that hit the nail;
He was just a common ranger, just a ridin' pilgrim stranger,
And he labored with the sinners of the trail.

Once a Yaqui knifed a woman, jealous mad,
Then hit southward with the old, old killer's plan,
And nobody missed the woman very bad,
While they'd just a little rather missed the man.
But the ranger crossed his trail and sniffed it glad,
And then loped away to bring him back again,
For he stood for peace and order on the lonely, sunny border
And his business was to hunt for sinful men!

So the trail it led him southward all the day,
Through the shinin' country of the thorn and snake,
Where the heat had drove the lizards from their play
To the shade of rock and bush and yucca stake.
And the mountains heaved and rippled far away
And the desert broiled as on the devil's prong,
But he didn't mind the devil if his head kept clear and level
And the hoofs beat out their clear and steady song.

Came the yellow west, and on a far off rise
Something black crawled up and dropped beyond the rim,
And he reached his rifle out and rubbed his eyes
While he cussed the southern hills for growin' dim.
Down a hazy 'royo came the coyote cries,
Like they laughed at him because he'd lost his mark,
And the smile that brands a fighter pulled his mouth a little tighter
As he set his spurs and rode on through the dark.

Came the moonlight on a trail that wriggled higher
Through the mountains that look into Mexico,
And the shadows strung his nerves like banjo wire
And the miles and minutes dragged unearthly slow.
Then a black mesquite spit out a thread of fire
And the canyon walls flung thunder back again,
And he caught himself and fumbled at his rifle while he grumbled
That his bridle arm had weight enough for ten.

Though his rifle pointed wavy-like and slack
And he grabbed for leather at his hawse's shy,
Yet he sent a soft-nosed exhortation back
That convinced the sinner--just above the eye.
So the sinner sprawled among the shadows black
While the ranger drifted north beneath the moon,
Wabblin' crazy in his saddle, workin' hard to stay a-straddle
While the hoofs beat out a slow and sorry tune.

When the sheriff got up early out of bed,
How he stared and vowed his soul a total loss,

As he saw the droopy thing all blotched with red
That came ridin' in aboard a tremblin' hawse.
But "I got 'im" was the most the ranger said
And you couldn't hire him, now, to tell the tale;
He was just a quiet ranger, just a ridin' pilgrim stranger
And he labored with the sinners of the trail.

Charles Badger Clark, Jr.

THE INSULT

I'VE swum the Colorado where she runs close down to hell;
I've braced the faro layouts in Cheyenne;
I've fought for muddy water with a bunch of howlin' swine
An' swallowed hot tamales and cayenne;
I've rode a pitchin' broncho till the sky was underneath;
I've tackled every desert in the land;
I've sampled XX whiskey till I couldn't hardly see
An' dallied with the quicksands of the Grande;
I've argued with the marshals of a half a dozen burgs;
I've been dragged free and fancy by a cow;
I've had three years' campaignin' with the fightin', bitin' Ninth,
An' I never lost my temper till right now.
I've had the yeller fever and been shot plum full of holes;
I've grabbed an army mule plum by the tail;
But I've never been so snortin', really highfalutin' mad
As when you up and hands me ginger ale.

Anonymous.

"THE ROAD TO RUIN"[2]

I WENT into the grog-shop, Tom, and stood beside the bar,

And drank a glass of lemonade and smoked a bad seegar.

The same old kegs and jugs was thar, the same we used to know

When we was on the round-up, Tom, some twenty years ago.

The bar-tender is not the same. The one who used to sell

Corroded tangle-foot to us, is rotting now in hell.

This one has got a plate-glass front, he combs his hair quite low,

He looks just like the one we knew some twenty years ago.

Old soak came up and asked for booze and had the same old grin

While others burned their living forms and wet their coats with gin.

Outside the doorway women stood, their faces seamed with woe

And wept just like they used to weep some twenty years ago.

I asked about our old-time friends, those cheery, sporty men;

And some was in the poor-house, Tom, and some was in the pen.

You know the one you liked the best?--the hang-man laid him low,--

Oh, few are left that used to booze some twenty years ago.

You recollect our favorite, whom pride claimed for her own,--

He used to say that he could booze or leave the stuff alone.

He perished for the James Fitz James, out in the rain and snow,--

Yes, few survive who used to booze some twenty years ago.

I visited the old church yard and there I saw the graves

Of those who used to drown their woes in old fermented ways.

I saw the graves of women thar, lying where the daisies grow,

Who wept and died of broken hearts some twenty years ago.

Anonymous.

[2] A famous saloon in West Texas carried this unusual sign.

THE OUTLAW

WHEN my loop takes hold on a two-year-old,
By the feet or the neck or the horn,
He kin plunge and fight till his eyes go white,
But I'll throw him as sure as you're born.
Though the taut rope sing like a banjo string
And the latigoes creak and strain,
Yet I've got no fear of an outlaw steer
And I'll tumble him on the plain.

*For a man is a man and a steer is a beast,
And the man is the boss of the herd;
And each of the bunch, from the biggest to least,
Must come down when he says the word.*

When my leg swings 'cross on an outlaw hawse
And my spurs clinch into his hide,
He kin r'ar and pitch over hill and ditch,
But wherever he goes I'll ride.
Let 'im spin and flop like a crazy top,
Or flit like a wind-whipped smoke,
But he'll know the feel of my rowelled heel
Till he's happy to own he's broke.

*For a man is a man and a hawse is a brute,
And the hawse may be prince of his clan,
But he'll bow to the bit and the steel-shod boot
And own that his boss is the man.*

When the devil at rest underneath my vest
Gets up and begins to paw,
And my hot tongue strains at its bridle-reins,
Then I tackle the real outlaw;
When I get plumb riled and my sense goes wild,
And my temper has fractious growed,
If he'll hump his neck just a triflin' speck,
Then it's dollars to dimes I'm throwed.

For a man is a man, but he's partly a beast--

He kin brag till he makes you deaf,

But the one, lone brute, from the West to the East,

That he kaint quite break, is himse'f.

Charles B. Clark, Jr.

THE DESERT

'T WAS the lean coyote told me, baring his slavish soul,
As I counted the ribs of my dead cayuse and cursed at the desert
sky,
The tale of the Upland Rider's fate while I dug in the water hole
For a drop, a taste of the bitter seep; but the water hole was dry!

"He came," said the lean coyote, "and he cursed as his pony fell;
And he counted his pony's ribs aloud; yea, even as you have done.
He raved as he ripped at the clay-red sand like an imp from the pit of
hell,
Shriveled with thirst for a thousand years and craving a drop--just
one."

"His name?" I asked, and he told me, yawning to hide a grin:

"His name is writ on the prison roll and many a place beside;

Last, he scribbled it on the sand with a finger seared and thin,

And I watched his face as he spelled it out--laughed as I laughed,

and died.

"And thus," said the lean coyote, "his need is the hungry's feast,

And mine." I fumbled and pulled my gun--emptied it wild and fast,

But one of the crazy shots went home and silenced the waiting beast;

There lay the shape of the Liar, dead! 'Twas I that should laugh

the last.

Laugh? Nay, now I would write my name as the Upland Rider wrote;

Write? What need, for before my eyes in a wide and wavering line

I saw the trace of a written word and letter by letter float

Into a mist as the world grew dark; and I knew that the name was

mine.

Dreams and visions within the dream; turmoil and fire and pain;

Hands that proffered a brimming cup--empty, ere I could take;

Then the burst of a thunder-head--rain! It was rude, fierce rain!

Blindly down to the hole I crept, shivering, drenched, awake!

Dawn--and the edge of the red-rimmed sun scattering golden flame,

As stumbling down to the water hole came the horse that I thought

was dead;

But never a sign of the other beast nor a trace of a rider's name;

Just a rain-washed track and an empty gun--and the old home trail

ahead.

Henry Herbert Knibbs.

WHISKEY BILL,--A FRAGMENT

A-DOWN the road and gun in hand

Comes Whiskey Bill, mad Whiskey Bill;

A-lookin' for some place to land

Comes Whiskey Bill.

An' everybody'd like to be

Ten miles away behind a tree

When on his joyous, aching spree

Starts Whiskey Bill.

The times have changed since you made love,

O Whiskey Bill, O Whiskey Bill!

The happy sun grinned up above

At Whiskey Bill.

And down the middle of the street

The sheriff comes on toe and feet

A-wishin' for one fretful peek

At Whiskey Bill.

The cows go grazing o'er the lea,--

Poor Whiskey Bill! Poor Whiskey Bill!

An' aching thoughts pour in on me

Of Whiskey Bill.

The sheriff up and found his stride;

Bill's soul went shootin' down the slide,--

How are things on the Great Divide,

O Whiskey Bill?

Anonymous.

DENVER JIM

"SAY, fellers, that ornery thief must be nigh us,
For I jist saw him across this way to the right;
Ah, there he is now right under that burr-oak
As fearless and cool as if waitin' all night.
Well, come on, but jist get every shooter all ready
Fur him, if he's spilin' to give us a fight;
The birds in the grove will sing chants to our picnic
An' that limb hangin' over him stands about right.

"Say, stranger, good mornin'. Why, dog blast my lasso, boys,
If it ain't Denver Jim that's corralled here at last.
Right aside for the jilly. Well, Jim, we are searchin'
All night for a couple about of your cast.
An' seein' yer enter this openin' so charmin'
We thought perhaps yer might give us the trail.
Haven't seen anything that would answer description?
What a nerve that chap has, but it will not avail.

"Want to trade hosses fur the one I am stridin'
Will you give me five hundred betwixt fur the boot?
Say, Jim, that air gold is the strongest temptation
An' many a man would say take it and scoot.
But we don't belong to that denomination;
You have got to the end of your rope, Denver Jim.
In ten minutes more we'll be crossin' the prairie,
An' you will be hangin' there right from that limb.

"Have you got any speakin' why the sentence ain't proper?"

Here, take you a drink from the old whiskey flask.
Ar' not dry? Well, I am, an' will drink ter yer, pard,
An' wish that this court will not bungle this task.
There, the old lasso circles your neck like a fixture;
Here, boys, take the line an' wait fer the word;
I am sorry, old boy, that your claim has gone under;
Fer yer don't meet yer fate like the low, common herd.

"What's that? So yer want me to answer a letter,--
Well, give it to me till I make it all right,
A moment or two will be only good manners,
The judicious acts of this court will be white.
'Long Point, Arkansas, the thirteenth of August,
My dearest son James, somewhere out in the West,
For long, weary months I've been waiting for tidings
Since your last loving letter came eastward to bless.

"God bless you, my son, for thus sending that money,
Remembering your mother when sorely in need.
May the angels from heaven now guard you from danger
And happiness follow your generous deed.
How I long so to see you come into the doorway,
As you used to, of old, when weary, to rest.
May the days be but few when again I can greet you,
My comfort and staff, is your mother's request.'

"Say, pard, here's your letter. I'm not good at writin',
I think you'd do better to answer them lines;
An' fer fear I might want it I'll take off that lasso,

An' the hoss you kin leave when you git to the pines.
An' Jim, when yer see yer old mother jist tell her
That a wee bit o' writin' kinder hastened the day
When her boy could come eastward to stay with her always.
Come boys, up and mount and to Denver away."

O'er the prairies the sun tipped the trees with its splendor,
The dew on the grass flashed the diamonds so bright,
As the tenderest memories came like a blessing
From the days of sweet childhood on pinions of light.
Not a word more was spoken as they parted that morning,
Yet the trail of a tear marked each cheek as they turned;
For higher than law is the love of a mother,--
It reversed the decision,--the court was adjourned.

Sherman D. Richardson.

THE VIGILANTES

WE are the whirlwinds that winnow the West--
We scatter the wicked like straw!
We are the Nemeses, never at rest--
We are Justice, and Right, and the Law!

Moon on the snow and a blood-chilling blast,
Sharp-throbbing hoofs like the heart-beat of fear,
A halt, a swift parley, a pause--then at last
A stiff, swinging figure cut darkly and sheer
Against the blue steel of the sky; ghastly white
Every on-looking face. Men, our duty was clear;
Yet ah! what a soul to send forth to the night!

Ours is a service brute-hateful and grim;
Little we love the wild task that we seek;
Are they dainty to deal with--the fear-rigid limb,
The curse and the struggle, the blasphemous shriek?
Nay, but men must endure while their bodies have breath;
God made us strong to avenge Him the weak--
To dispense his sure wages of sin--which is death.

We stand for our duty: while wrong works its will,
Our search shall be stern and our course shall be wide;
Retribution shall prove that the just liveth still,
And its horrors and dangers our hearts can abide,
That safety and honor may tread in our path;
The vengeance of Heaven shall speed at our side,
As we follow unwearied our mission of wrath.

We are the whirlwinds that winnow the West--
We scatter the wicked like straw!
We are the Nemeses, never at rest--
We are Justice, and Right, and the Law!

Margaret Ashmun.

THE BANDIT'S GRAVE

'MID lava rock and glaring sand,
'Neath the desert's brassy skies,
Bound in the silent chains of death
A border bandit lies.
The poppy waves her golden glow
Above the lowly mound;

The cactus stands with lances drawn,--

A martial guard around.

His dreams are free from guile or greed,

Or foray's wild alarms.

No fears creep in to break his rest

In the desert's scorching arms.

He sleeps in peace beside the trail,

Where the twilight shadows play,

Though they watch each night for his return

A thousand miles away.

From the mesquite groves a night bird calls

When the western skies grow red;

The sand storm sings his deadly song

Above the sleeper's head.

His steed has wandered to the hills

And helpless are his hands,

Yet peons curse his memory

Across the shifting sands.

The desert cricket tunes his pipes

When the half-grown moon shines dim;

The sage thrush trills her evening song--

But what are they to him?

A rude-built cross beside the trail

That follows to the west

Casts its long-drawn, ghastly shadow

Across the sleeper's breast.

A lone coyote comes by night
And sits beside his bed,
Sobbing the midnight hours away
With gaunt, up-lifted head.
The lizard trails his aimless way
Across the lonely mound,
When the star-guards of the desert
Their pickets post around.

The winter snows will heap their drifts
Among the leafless sage;
The pallid hosts of the blizzard
Will lift their voice in rage;
The gentle rains of early spring
Will woo the flowers to bloom,
And scatter their fleeting incense
O'er the border bandit's tomb.

Charles Pitt.

THE OLD MACKENZIE TRAIL

SEE, stretching yonder o'er that low divide
Which parts the falling rain,--the eastern slope
Sends down its waters to the southern sea
Through Double Mountain's winding length of stream;
The western side spreads out into a plain,
Which sinks away o'er tawny, rolling leagues
At last into the rushing Rio Grande,--
See, faintly showing on that distant ridge,

The deep-cut pathways through the shelving crest,
Sage-matted now and rimmed with chaparral,
The dim reminders of the olden times,
The life of stir, of blood, of Indian raid,
The hunt of buffalo and antelope;
The camp, the wagon train, the sea of steers;
The cowboy's lonely vigil through the night;
The stampede and the wild ride through the storm;
The call of California's golden flood;
The impulse of the Saxon's "Westward Ho"
Which set our fathers' faces from the east,
To spread resistless o'er the barren wastes,
To people all the regions 'neath the sun--
Those vikings of the old Mackenzie Trail.

It winds--this old forgotten cattle trail--
Through valleys still and silent even now,
Save when the yellow-breasted desert lark
Cries shrill and lonely from a dead mesquite,
In quivering notes set in a minor key;
The endless round of sunny days, of starry nights,
The desert's blank immutability.
The coyote's howl is heard at dark from some
Low-lying hill; companioned by the loafer wolf
They yelp in concert to the far off stars,
Or gnaw the bleached bones in savage rage
That lie unburied by the grass-grown paths.

The prairie dogs play sentinel by day
And backward slips the badger to his den;
The whir, the fatal strike of rattlesnake,
A staring buzzard floating in the blue,
And, now and then, the curlew's eerie call,--
Lost, always lost, and seeking evermore.
All else is mute and dormant; vacantly
The sun looks down, the days run idly on,
The breezes whirl the dust, which eddying falls
Smothering the records of the westward caravans,
Where silent heaps of wreck and nameless graves
Make milestones for the old Mackenzie Trail.

Across the Brazos, Colorado, through
Concho's broad, fair valley, sweeping on
By Abilene it climbs upon the plains,
The Llano Estacado (beyond lie wastes
Of alkali and hunger gaunt and death),--
And here is lost in shifting rifts of sand.
Anon it lingers by a hidden spring
That bubbles joy into the wilderness;
Its pathway trenched that distant mountain side,
Now grown to gulches through torrential rain.
De Vaca gathered pinons by the way,
Long ere the furrows grew on yonder hill,
Cut by the creaking prairie-schooner wheels;
La Salle, the gentle Frenchman, crossed this course,

And went to death and to a nameless grave.
For ages and for ages through the past
Comanches and Apaches from the north
Came sweeping southward, searching for the sun,
And charged in mimic combat on the sea.
The scions of Montezuma's low-browed race
Perhaps have seen that knotted, thorn-clad tree;
Or sucked the cactus apples growing there.
All these have passed, and passed the immigrants,
Who bore the westward fever in their brain,
The Norseman tang for roving in their veins;
Who loved the plains as sailors love the sea,
Braved danger, death, and found a resting place
While traveling on the old Mackenzie Trail.

Brave old Mackenzie long has laid him down
To rest beyond the trail that bears his name;
A granite mountain makes his monument;
The northers, moaning o'er the low divide,
Go gently past his long deserted camps.
No more his rangers guard the wild frontier,
No more he leads them in the border fight.
No more the mavericks, winding stream of horns
To Kansas bound; the dust, the cowboy songs
And cries, the pistol's sharp report,--the free,
Wild days in Texas by the Rio Grande.
And some men say when dusky night shuts down,

Dark, cloudy nights without a kindly star,
One sees dim horsemen skimming o'er the plain
Hard by Mackenzie's trail; and keener ears
Have heard from deep within the bordering hills
The tramp of ghostly hoofs, faint cattle lows,
The rumble of a moving wagon train,
Sometimes far echoes of a frontier song;
Then sounds grow fainter, shadows troop away,--
On westward, westward, as they in olden time
Went ranging o'er the old Mackenzie Trail.

John A. Lomax.

THE SHEEP-HERDER[3]

ALL day across the sagebrush flat,
Beneath the sun of June,
My sheep they loaf and feed and bleat
Their never changin' tune.
And then, at night time, when they lay
As quiet as a stone,
I hear the gray wolf far away,
"Alo-one!" he says, "Alo-one!"

A-a! ma-a! ba-a! eh-eh-eh!
The tune the woollies sing;
It's rasped my ears, it seems, for years,
Though really just since Spring;
And nothin', far as I can see
Around the circle's sweep,

But sky and plain, my dreams and me

And them infernal sheep.

I've got one book--it's poetry--

A bunch of pretty wrongs

An Eastern lunger gave to me;

He said 'twas "shepherd songs."

But, though that poet sure is deep

And has sweet things to say,

He never seen a herd of sheep

Or smelt them, anyway.

A-a! ma-a! ba-a! eh-eh-eh!

My woollies greasy gray,

An awful change has hit the range

Since that old poet's day.

For you're just silly, on'ry brutes

And I look like distress,

And my pipe ain't the kind that toots

And there's no "shepherdess."

Yet 'way down home in Kansas State,

Bliss Township, Section Five,

There's one that's promised me to wait,

The sweetest girl alive;

That's why I salt my wages down

And mend my clothes with strings,

While others blow their pay in town

For booze and other things.

A-a! ma-a! ba-a! eh-eh-eh!

My Minnie, don't be sad;

Next year we'll lease that splendid piece

That corners on your dad.

We'll drive to "literary," dear,

The way we used to do

And turn my lonely workin' here

To happiness for you.

Suppose, down near that rattlers' den,

While I sit here and dream,

I'd spy a bunch of ugly men

And hear a woman scream.

Suppose I'd let my rifle shout

And drop the men in rows,

And then the woman should turn out--

My Minnie!--just suppose.

A-a! ma-a! ba-a! eh-eh-eh!

The tune would then be gay;

There is, I mind, a parson kind

Just forty miles away.

Why, Eden would come back again,

With sage and sheep corrals,

And I could swing a singin' pen

To write her "pastorals."

I pack a rifle on my arm

And jump at flies that buzz;

There's nothin' here to do me harm;

I sometimes wish there was.

If through that brush above the pool

A red should creep--and creep--

Wah! cut down on 'im!--Stop, you fool!

That's nothin' but a sheep.

A-a! ma-a! ba-a!--Hell!

Oh, sky and plain and bluff!

Unless my mail comes up the trail

I'm locoed, sure enough.

What's that?--a dust-whiff near the butte

Right where my last trail ran,

A movin' speck, a--wagon! Hoot!

Thank God! here comes a man.

Charles Badger Clark, Jr.

[3] Only such cowboys as are in desperate need of employment ever
become sheep-herders.

A COWBOY AT THE CARNIVAL

YES, o' cose it's interestin' to a feller from the range,

Mighty queerish, too, I tell you,--sich a racket fer a change;

From a life among the cattle, from a wool shirt and the chaps

To the biled shirt o' the city and the other tony traps.

Never seed sich herds o' people throwed together, every brand

O' humanity, I reckon, in this big mountain land

Rounded up right here in Denver, runnin' on new sort o' feed.

Actin' restless an' oneasy, like they threatened to stampede.

Mighty curious to a rider comin' from the range, he feels
What you'd call a lost sensation from sombrero clar to heels;
Like a critter stray that drifted in a windstorm from its range
To another run o' grazin' where the brands it sees are strange.
Then I see a city herder, a policeman, don't you know,
Sort o' think he's got men spotted an' is 'bout to make a throw
Fer to catch me an' corral me fer a stray till he can talk
On the wire an' tell the owner fer to come an' get his stock.

Yes, it's mighty strange an' funny fer a cowboy, as you say,
Fer to hit a camp like this one, so unanimously gay;
But I want to tell you, pardner, that a rider sich as me
Isn't built fer feedin' on sich crazy jamboree.
Every bone I got's a-achin', an' my feet as sore as if
I had hit a bed o' cactus, an' my hinges is as stiff
From a-hittin' these hot pavements as a feller's jints kin git,--
'Taint like holdin' down a broncho on the range, a little bit.

I'm hankerin', I tell you, fer to hit the trail an' run
Like a crazy, locoed yearlin' from this big cloud-burst o' fun
Back toward the cattle ranches, where a feller's breath comes free
An' he wears the clothes that fits him, 'stead o' this slick toggery.
Where his home is in the saddle, an' the heavens is his roof,
An' his ever'day companions wears the hide an' cloven hoof,
Where the beller of the cattle is the only sound he hears,
An' he never thinks o' nothin' but his grub an' hoss an' steers.

Anonymous.

THE OLD COWMAN

I RODE across a valley range

I hadn't seen for years.

The trail was all so spoilt and strange

It nearly fetched the tears.

I had to let ten fences down,--

(The fussy lanes ran wrong)

And each new line would make me frown

And hum a mournin' song.

Oh, it's squeak! squeak! squeak!

Hear 'em stretchin' of the wire!

The nester brand is on the land;

I reckon I'll retire.

While progress toots her brassy horn

And makes her motor buzz,

I thank the Lord I wasn't born

No later than I wuz!

'Twas good to live when all the sod,

Without no fence nor fuss,

Belonged in partnership to God,

The Government and us.

With skyline bounds from east to west

And room to go and come,

I loved my fellowman the best

When he was scattered some.

Oh, it's squeak! squeak! squeak!

Close and closer cramps the wire!

There's hardly play to back away

And call a man a liar.

Their house has locks on every door;

Their land is in a crate.

There ain't the plains of God no more,

They're only real estate.

There's land where yet no ditchers dig

Nor cranks experiment;

It's only lovely, free and big

And isn't worth a cent.

I pray that them who come to spoil

May wait till I am dead

Before they foul that blessed soil

With fence and cabbage head.

Yet it's squeak! squeak! squeak!

Far and farther crawls the wire!

To crowd and pinch another inch

Is all their heart's desire.

The world is over-stocked with men,

And some will see the day

When each must keep his little pen,

But I'll be far away.

When my old soul hunts range and rest

Beyond the last divide,

Just plant me in some stretch of West

That's sunny, lone and wide.

Let cattle rub my tombstone down
And coyotes mourn their kin,
Let hawses paw and tramp the moun',--
But don't you fence it in!

Oh, it's squeak! squeak! squeak!
And they pen the land with wire.
They figure fence and copper cents
Where we laughed round the fire.
Job cussed his birthday, night and morn
In his old land of Uz,
But I'm just glad I wasn't born
No later than I wuz!

Charles Badger Clark, Jr.

THE GILA MONSTER ROUTE

THE lingering sunset across the plain
Kissed the rear-end door of an east-bound train,
And shone on a passing track close by
Where a ding-bat sat on a rotting tie.

He was ditched by a shock and a cruel fate.
The con high-balled, and the manifest freight
Pulled out on the stem behind the mail,
And she hit the ball on a sanded rail.

As she pulled away in the falling light
He could see the gleam of her red tail-light.
Then the moon arose and the stars came out--
He was ditched on the Gila Monster Route.

Nothing in sight but sand and space;
No chance for a gink to feed his face;
Not even a shack to beg for a lump,
Or a hen-house to frisk for a single gump.

He gazed far out on the solitude;
He drooped his head and began to brood;
He thought of the time he lost his mate
In a hostile burg on the Nickle Plate.

They had mooched the stem and threw their feet,
And speared four-bits on which to eat;
But deprived themselves of daily bread
And shafted their coin for "dago red."

Down by the track in the jungle's glade,
In the cool green grass, in the tules' shade,
They shed their coats and ditched their shoes
And tanked up full of that colored booze.

Then they took a flop with their skins plumb full,
And they did not hear the harnessed bull,
Till he shook them out of their boozy nap,
With a husky voice and a loaded sap.

They were charged with "vag," for they had no kale,
And the judge said, "Sixty days in jail."
But the John had a bindle,--a worker's plea,--
So they gave him a floater and set him free.

They had turned him up, but ditched his mate,

So he grabbed the guts of an east-bound freight,
He flung his form on a rusty rod,
Till he heard the shack say, "Hit the sod!"

The John piled off, he was in the ditch,
With two switch lamps and a rusty switch,--
A poor, old, seedy, half-starved bo
On a hostile pike, without a show.

From away off somewhere in the dark
Came the sharp, short notes of a coyote's bark.
The bo looked round and quickly rose
And shook the dust from his threadbare clothes.

Off in the west through the moonlit night
He saw the gleam of a big head-light--
An east-bound stock train hummed the rail;
She was due at the switch to clear the mail.

As she drew up close, the head-end shack
Threw the switch to the passenger track,
The stock rolled in and off the main,
And the line was clear for the west-bound train.

When she hove in sight far up the track,
She was workin' steam, with her brake shoes slack,
She hollered once at the whistle post,
Then she flitted by like a frightened ghost.

He could hear the roar of the big six-wheel,
And her driver's pound on the polished steel,
And the screech of her flanges on the rail

As she beat it west o'er the desert trail.

The John got busy and took the risk,
He climbed aboard and began to frisk,
He reached up high and began to feel
For the end-door pin--then he cracked the seal.

'Twas a double-decked stock-car, filled with sheep,
Old John crawled in and went to sleep.
She whistled twice and high-balled out,--
They were off, down the Gila Monster Route.

L. F. Post and Glenn Norton.

THE CALL OF THE PLAINS

HO! wind of the far, far prairies!
Free as the waves of the sea!
Your voice is sweet as in alien street
The cry of a friend to me!
You bring me the breath of the prairies,
Known in the days that are sped,
The wild geese's cry and the blue, blue sky
And the sailing clouds o'er head!

My eyes are weary with longing
For a sight of the sage grass gray,
For the dazzling light of a noontide bright
And the joy of the open day!
Oh, to hear once more the clanking
Of the noisy cowboy's spur,
And the south wind's kiss like a mild caress

Making the grasses stir.

I dream of the wide, wide prairies
Touched with their glistening sheen,
The coyotes' cry and the wind-swept sky
And the waving billows of green!
And oh, for a night in the open
Where no sound discordant mars,
And the marvelous glow, when the sun is low,
And the silence under the stars!

Ho, wind from the western prairies!
Ho, voice from a far domain!
I feel in your breath what I'll feel till death,
The call of the plains again!
The call of the Spirit of Freedom
To the spirit of freedom in me;
My heart leaps high with a jubilant cry
And I answer in ecstasy!

Ethel MacDiarmid.

WHERE THE GRIZZLY DWELLS[4]

I ADMIRE the artificial art of the East;
But I love more the inimitable art of the West,
Where nature's handiwork lies in virginal beauty.
Amidst the hum of city life
I saunter back to dreams of home.
Astride the back of my trusty steed
I wander away, losing myself

In the foothills of the Rockies.

Away from human habitations,
Up the rugged slopes,
Through the timbered stretches,
I hear the frightful cry of wolves
And see a bear sneaking up behind.

Many nights ago,
While herding a bunch of cattle
During the round-up season,
I lay upon the grass
Looking at the mated stars;
I wondered if a cowboy
Could go to the Unknown Place,
The Happy Hunting Ground,
When this short life is over.

But, here or there, I shall always live
In the land of mountain air
Where the grizzly dwells
And sage brush grows;
Where mountain trout are not a few;
In the land of the Bitterroot,--
The Indian land,--Land of the Golden West.

James Fox.

[4] Fox is a halfbreed Indian who sent me a lot of verse. Although he had never heard of Walt Whitman, these stanzas suggest that poet. The spelling and punctuation are mine.

A COWBOY TOAST

HERE'S to the passing cowboy, the plowman's pioneer;
His home, the boundless mesa, he of any man the peer;
Around his wide sombrero was stretched the rattler's hide,
His bridle sporting conchos, his lasso at his side.
All day he roamed the prairies, at night he, with the stars,
Kept vigil o'er thousands held by neither posts nor bars;
With never a diversion in all the lonesome land,
But cattle, cattle, cattle, and sun and sage and sand.

Sometimes the hoot-owl hailed him, when scudding through the flat;
And prairie dogs would sauce him, as at their doors they sat;
The rattler hissed its warning when near its haunts he trod
Some Texas steer pursuing o'er the pathless waste of sod.
With lasso, quirt, and 'colter the cowboy knew his skill;
They pass with him to history and naught their place can fill;
While he, bold broncho rider, ne'er conned a lesson page,--
But cattle, cattle, cattle, and sun and sand and sage.

And oh! the long night watches, with terror in the skies!
When lightning played and mocked him till blinded were his eyes;
When raged the storm around him, and fear was in his heart
Lest panic-stricken leaders might make the whole herd start.
That meant a death for many, perhaps a wild stampede,
When none could stem the fury of the cattle in the lead;
Ah, then life seemed so little and death so very near,--
With cattle, cattle, cattle, and darkness everywhere.

Then quaff with me a bumper of water, clear and pure,

To the memory of the cowboy whose fame must e'er endure
 From the Llano Estacado to Dakota's distant sands,
 Where were herded countless thousands in the days of fenceless lands.
 Let us rear for him an altar in the Temple of the Brave,
 And weave of Texas grasses a garland for his grave;
 And offer him a guerdon for the work that he has done
 With cattle, cattle, cattle, and sage and sand and sun.

James Barton Adams.

RIDIN' UP THE ROCKY TRAIL FROM TOWN

"Billy Leamont rode out of the town--
Close at his shoulder rode Jack Lorell--
 Over the leagues of the prairies brown,
 Into the hills where the sun goes down--

Billy Leamont and Jack Lorell!

* * *

Billy Leamont looked down the dell--
Dead below; him lay Jack Lorell--
 With his gun at his forehead he fired and fell,
 Then rode they two through the streets of hell--
Billy Leamont and Jack Lorell!"

THE BALLAD OF BILLY LEAMONT.[5]

WE'RE the children of the open and we hate the haunts o' men,
 But we had to come to town to get the mail.
 And we're ridin' home at daybreak--'cause the air is cooler then--
 All 'cept one of us that stopped behind in jail.
 Shorty's nose won't bear paradin', Bill's off eye is darkly fadin',

All our toilets show a touch of disarray,

For we found that City life is a constant round of strife

And we aint the breed for shyin' from a fray.

*Chant your warhoops, pardners, dear, while the east turns pale with
fear*

And the chaparral is tremblin' all aroun'

For we're wicked to the marrer; we're a midnight dream of terror

When we're ridin' up the rocky trail from town!

We acquired our hasty temper from our friend, the centipede.

From the rattlesnake we learnt to guard our rights.

We have gathered fightin' pointers from the famous bronco steed

And the bobcat teached us reppertee that bites.

So when some high-collared herrin' jeered the garb that I was wearin'

'Twasn't long till we had got where talkin' ends,

And he et his ill-bred chat, with a sauce of derby hat,

While my merry pardners entertained his friends.

Sing 'er out, my buckeroos! Let the desert hear the news.

Tell the stars the way we rubbed the haughty down.

*We're the fiercest wolves a-prowlin' and it's just our night for
howlin'*

When we're ridin' up the rocky trail from town.

Since the days that Lot and Abram split the Jordan range in halves,

Just to fix it so their punchers wouldn't fight,

Since old Jacob skinned his dad-in-law of six years' crop of calves

And then hit the trail for Canaan in the night,

There has been a taste for battle 'mong the men that follow cattle

And a love of doin' things that's wild and strange.

And the warmth of Laban's words when he missed his speckled herds

Still is useful in the language of the range.

Sing 'er out, my bold coyotes! leather fists and leather throats,

For we wear the brand of Ishm'el like a crown.

We're the sons o' desolation, we're the outlaws of creation--

Ee-Yow! a-ridin' up the rocky trail from town!

[5] This fragment is not included in Mr. Clark's poem.

THE DISAPPOINTED TENDERFOOT

HE reached the West in a palace car where the writers tell us the
cowboys are,

With the redskin bold and the centipede and the rattlesnake and the
loco weed.

He looked around for the Buckskin Joes and the things he'd seen in
the Wild West shows--

The cowgirls gay and the bronchos wild and the painted face of the
Injun child.

He listened close for the fierce war-whoop, and his pent-up spirits
began to droop,

And he wondered then if the hills and nooks held none of the sights
of the story books.

He'd hoped he would see the marshal pot some bold bad man with a
pistol shot,

And entered a low saloon by chance, where the tenderfoot is supposed
to dance

While the cowboy shoots at his bootheels there and the smoke of powder

begrims the air,

But all was quiet as if he'd strayed to that silent spot where the
dead are laid.

Not even a faro game was seen, and none flaunted the long, long green.

'Twas a blow for him who had come in quest of a touch of the real
wild woolly West.

He vainly sought for a bad cayuse and the swirl and swish of the
flying noose,

And the cowboy's yell as he roped a steer, but nothing of this fell
on his ear.

Not even a wide-brimmed hat he spied, but derbies flourished on every
side,

And the spurs and the "chaps" and the flannel shirts, the high-heeled
boots and the guns and the quirts,

The cowboy saddles and silver bits and fancy bridles and swell outfits
He'd read about in the novels grim, were not on hand for the likes of
him.

He peered about for a stagecoach old, and a miner-man with a bag of
gold,

And a burro train with its pack-loads which he'd read they tie with
the diamond hitch.

The rattler's whirl and the coyote's wail ne'er sounded out as he hit
the trail;

And no one knew of a branding bee or a steer roundup that he longed to
see.

But the oldest settler named Six-Gun Sim rolled a cigarette and

remarked to him:

"The West hez gone to the East, my son, and it's only in tents sich things is done."

E. A. Brinninstool.

A COWBOY ALONE WITH HIS CONSCIENCE

WHEN I ride into the mountains on my little broncho bird,
Whar my ears are never pelted with the bawlin' o' the herd,
An' a sort o' dreamy quiet hangs upon the western air,
An' thar ain't no animation to be noticed anywhere;
Then I sort o' feel oneasy, git a notion in my head
I'm the only livin' mortal--everybody else is dead--
An' I feel a queer sensation, rather skeery like, an' odd,
When thar ain't nobody near me, 'ceptin' God.

Every rabbit that I startle from its shaded restin' place,
Seems a furry shaft o' silence shootin' into noiseless space,
An' a rattlesnake a crawlin' through the rocks so old an' gray
Helps along the ghostly feelin' in a rather startlin' way.
Every breeze that dares to whisper does it with a bated breath,
Every bush stands grim an' silent in a sort o' livin' death--
Tell you what, a feller's feelin's give him many an icy prod,
When thar ain't nobody near him, 'ceptin' God.

Somehow allus git to thinkin' o' the error o' my ways,
An' my memory goes wingin' back to childhood's happy days,
When a mother, now a restin' in the grave so dark an' deep,
Used to listen while I'd whisper, "Now I lay me down to sleep."
Then a sort o' guilty feelin' gits a surgin' in my breast,

An' I wonder how I'll stack up at the final judgment test,
 Conscience allus welts it to me with a mighty cuttin' rod,
 When thar ain't nobody near me, 'ceptin' God.

Take the very meanest sinner that the nation ever saw,
 One that don't respect religion more'n he respects the law,
 One that never does an action that's commendable or good,
 An' immerse him fur a season out in Nature's solitude,
 An' the cog-wheels o' his conscience 'll be rattled out o' gear,
 More'n if he 'tended preachin' every Sunday in the year,
 Fur his sins 'ill come a ridin' through his cranium rough shod,
 When thar ain't nobody near him, 'ceptin' God.

James Barton Adams.

JUST A-RIDIN'!

OH, for me a horse and saddle
 Every day without a change;
 With the desert sun a-blazin'
 On a hundred miles o' range,
 Just a-ridin', just a-ridin',
 Desert ripplin' in the sun,
 Mountains blue along the skyline,--
 I don't envy anyone.

When my feet are in the stirrups
 And my horse is on the bust;
 When his hoofs are flashin' lightnin'
 From a golden cloud o' dust;
 And the bawlin' of the cattle

Is a-comin' down the wind,--

Oh, a finer life than ridin'

Would be mighty hard to find,

Just a-ridin', just a-ridin',

Splittin' long cracks in the air,

Stirrin' up a baby cyclone,

Rootin' up the prickly pear.

I don't need no art exhibits

When the sunset does his best,

Paintin' everlastin' glories

On the mountains of the west.

And your operas look foolish

When the night bird starts his tune

And the desert's silver-mounted

By the kisses of the moon,

Just a-ridin', just a-ridin',

I don't envy kings nor czars

When the coyotes down the valley

Are a-singin' to the stars.

When my earthly trail is ended

And my final bacon curled,

And the last great round up's finished

At the Home Ranch of the world,

I don't want no harps or haloes,

Robes or other dress-up things,--

Let me ride the starry ranges

On a pinto horse with wings,

Just a-ridin', just a-ridin',

Splittin' chunks o' wintry air,

With your feet froze to your stirrups

And a snowdrift in your hair.

(As sent by Elwood Adams, a Colorado

cowpuncher.) See "Sun and Saddle

Leather," by Charles Badger Clark, Jr.

THE END OF THE TRAIL

SOH, Bossie, soh!

The water's handy heah,

The grass is plenty neah,

An' all the stars a-sparkle

Bekaze we drive no mo'--

We drive no mo'.

The long trail ends today,--

The long trail ends today,

The punchers go to play

And all you weary cattle

May sleep in peace for sure,--

May sleep in peace for sure,--

Sleep, sleep for sure.

The moon can't bite you heah,

Nor punchers fright you heah.

An' you-all will be beef befo'

We need you any mo',--

We need you any mo'!

From Pocock's "Curley."

THE END

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Transcriber's notes: Obvious spelling/typographical and punctuation errors have been corrected after careful comparison with other occurrences within the text and consultation of external sources.

Inconsistent spelling and inline hyphenation occurs across poems and songs and is retained.

Introduction: original shows "Travelling" printed across a line break.

Page 9: "Adios" appears once, "Adiós" elsewhere.

Page 68: "good-bye" appears once, "goodbye" elsewhere.

Page 90: "sage-brush" appears once, "sagebrush" elsewhere.

Page 115: original illegible. "You" in the author's transcription of the song in John Avery Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, 338, (Macmillan 1918),

<http://www.archive.org/details/cowboysongsother00lomarich>
(accessed March 29, 2007).

Page 139: "hang-man" hyphenation retained.

Page 183: "roundup" appears once, "round-up" elsewhere.

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