

Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

Category: Colorado Springs History

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Written by Super User

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SHEEP HERDING IN EL PASO COUNTY

This is an amazing long, illustrated (by a sketch artist) article in the January 1880 Harpers Monthly Magazine by Augustus Allen Hayes about the 'Shepherds of Colorado.' It is actually only about sheep 'ranching' in El Paso County not the rest of Colorado. But what makes it a unique and rare glimpse into this little remembered aspect of 'ranching' is its treatment by, and about, all the Englishmen who were attracted to 'Little London' far out West just 8 years after the 1871 founding of General Palmer's Colorado Springs. It is well known local history that Queen Palmer and Manitou's Dr. Bell attracted educated and moneyed people from England who came by Palmer's new railroad to his fair city.

But it is very little written about in local histories, that English 'Remittance' men and others, like the 'Colonel and the Commodore,' arrived in 1880 Colorado Territory much like they would have on a trip to a British Empire Colony like India. They, and the writer probes into the arts and economics of raising sheep as a 'business.' They had to learn from thoroughly 'westernized' settlers and characters, some of whom were from Colorado City which is referred to often. The author writes from the viewpoint of an easy chair in the upscale 'El Paso Club' remarking on the furnishings and wallpaper that he expected only back east. It was obviously his first trip west also. The illustrator wonderfully captures the contrast between the rough frontiersmen and the 'Easterners' and refined Englishmen. The sketch of 'Counting Sheep' on Page 204 is a classic.

This article, acquired at auction in its fragile original page form by Dave Hughes, is 18 pages long with 14 illustrations. Reproducing them digitally just as the pages looked like in the Harper's Monthly 128 years ago does more justice to the flavor of the age than had we just extracted and printed the text. You can buy a copy of just this article and its illustrations in the Old Colorado City Historical Society book store as a small, low cost - \$3.00 printed volume. It is long out of copyright.

"Remittance Men" were young English gentlemen who had come to the American West, either willingly or under parental pressure, "to learn ranching." If they did a lot of hunting and considerable "partying" besides, that was understandable, for it was a long distance to England, the source of disciplinary wrath which sent them here.

If you don't have time to read through all the long text, just page through the 14 pages and look at the 14 subtly humorous pen and ink sketches by 'W. A. Rogers' to see through the eye of an eastern artist looking at the still novel and frontier West.

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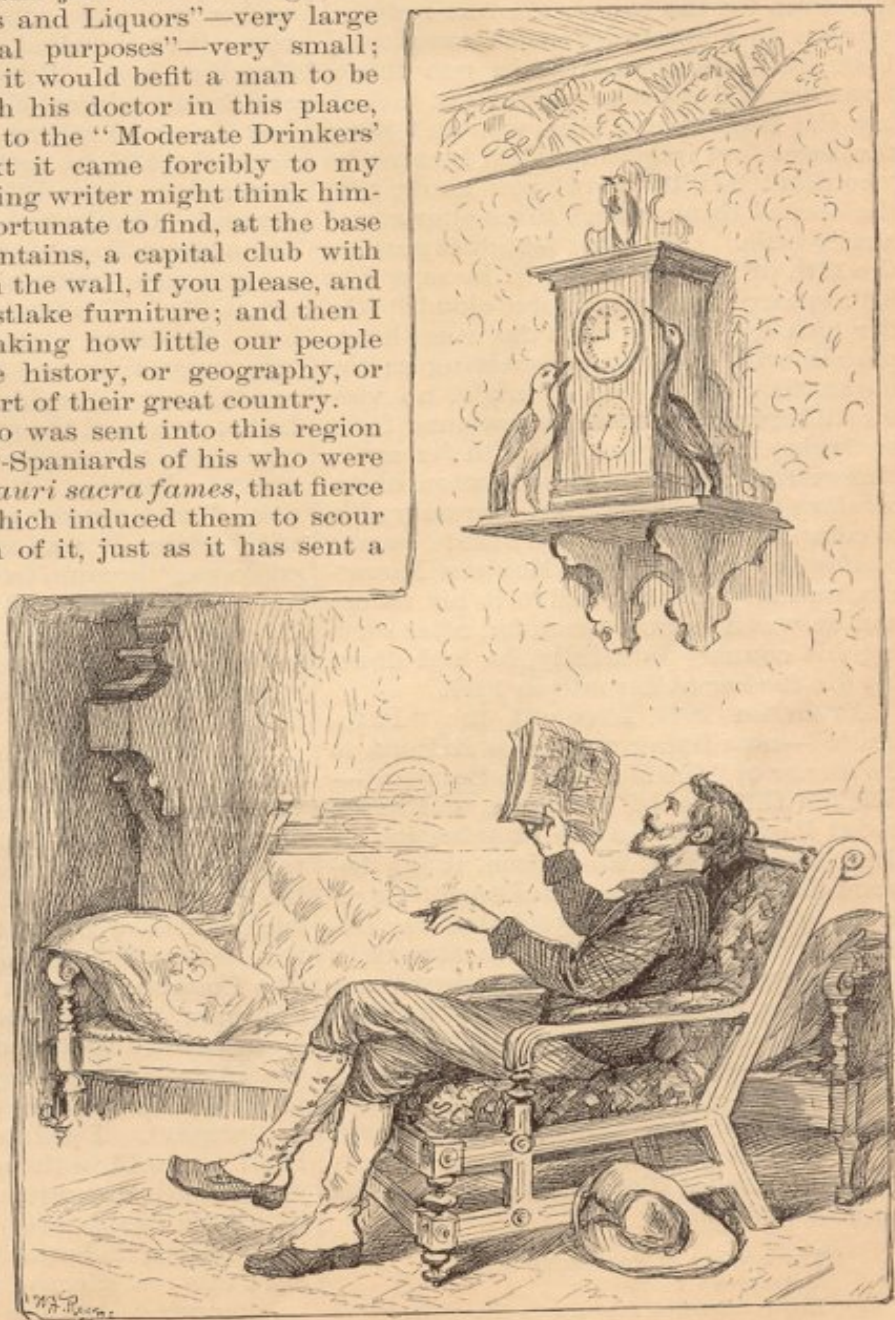
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THE SHEPHERDS OF COLORADO.

AS I sat, on a summer afternoon, on the balcony of El Paso Club, at Colorado Springs, I found myself inclined to meditation. Before me, and not far away, rose that beautiful Cheyenne Mountain (*Chy-ann*, they call it in the West) of which poor Fitz Hugh Ludlow said: "Its height is several thousand feet less than Pike's, but its contour is so noble and massive that this disadvantage is overlooked. There is a unity of conception in it unsurpassed by any mountain I have ever seen. It is full of living power. In the declining daylight its vast simple surface becomes the broadest mass of blue and purple shadow that ever lay on the easel of nature." I felt that I quite agreed with Mr. Ludlow, even if I failed to put the matter quite so expansively; and then my attention was diverted by a mule team, with the driver lying on his load, and just over it a sign, on which was, "Wines and Liquors"—very large—and, "for medical purposes"—very small; and I thought that it would befit a man to be on good terms with his doctor in this place, even if he belonged to the "Moderate Drinkers' Association." Next it came forcibly to my mind that a wandering writer might think himself exceptionally fortunate to find, at the base of the Rocky Mountains, a capital club with sage-green paper on the wall, if you please, and a gilt dado, and Eastlake furniture; and then I could not help thinking how little our people really know of the history, or geography, or resources, of this part of their great country.

In 1540 Coronado was sent into this region by those old fellow-Spaniards of his who were consumed with the *auri sacra fames*, that fierce hunger for gold, which induced them to scour the earth in search of it, just as it has sent a good many people who are not Spaniards into regions wild and desert. Eighty years before the Pilgrim Fathers landed at Plymouth he was perilously traversing the San Luis Park, and perhaps seeing the Wet Mountain Valley lying, as it does to-day, green and fertile between the two ranges; and he went away disappointed, after all. Then, in 1806, when Mr. Jefferson was President, and Aaron Burr was engaged in his treasonable conspiracy to found a new empire west



EL PASO CLUB ROOM.

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of the Alleghanies, General Wilkinson ordered Lieutenant Zebulon Pike, an adventurous and persevering officer of the United States army, to proceed westward, and explore the region between the Missouri and the frontier of Mexico. He left St. Louis on the 24th of June, and camped in the foot-hills at this point on the 25th of November. Now I had made the same journey in 1879, and beaten Pike hollow, for I left St. Louis at 9.15 P.M. on a Thursday, and arrived at the same place as he at 5 P.M. on Saturday, and I would not camp for the world, but was assigned a room by a hotel clerk with eyeglasses. I sympathized with Pike in one thing, however, as must many travellers, including the Englishman who wouldn't jump the three-foot irrigating ditch because he "couldn't tell, by Jove! you know, that the blasted thing wasn't three-quarters of a mile wide." Pike saw the great peak on the 15th of November, when he says that it "appeared like a small blue cloud." On the 17th he "marched at the usual hour, pushed with the idea of arriving at the mountains; but found at night no visible difference in their appearance from yesterday." And on the 25th he again "marched early, with expectation of ascending the mountain, but was only able to camp at its base." Poor Pike! he was modest, for he called it Mexican Mountain, and left others to give it his name; and he was a brave patriot, for, after serving his country faithfully, he laid down his life for her at Toronto in 1813.

Again, in 1843, Fremont, the "Pathfinder"—now living quietly in Arizona as Governor of "the Marvellous Country"—reached the base of this peak, and wrote about it; but still, in the imagination of the average American citizen, it lay beyond the "Great American Desert," as remote as Greenland, as mystical as the Delectable Mountains. Of white men only a few saw it—the scattered trappers and fur traders, camping, perhaps, on the Fontaine, and drinking from the Soda Spring (price nothing per glass), as they passed down from their little forts to winter on the Arkansas; and perhaps it was some of them who gave utterance to the sentiments which a Western poet has paraphrased as follows:

"I'm looking at your lofty head
Away up in the air,
Eight thousand feet above the plain
Where grows the prickly-pear.

A great big thing with ice on,
You seem to be up there.

"Away above the timber-line
You lift your frosty head,
Where lightnings are engendered,
And thunder-storms are bred.
But you'd be a bigger tract of land
If you were thin outspread."

It was the "old, old story" which turned the tide of migration in this direction. People probably never wanted gold more than after the panic of 1857, and the reports of its finding here in 1858 caused such a stampede across the plains as has never been equalled, except in early Californian days. Events moved rapidly, and in the winter of 1860-61 a Territorial Legislature, numbering some twenty-five devoted patriots, met at Colorado City, just about where Pike and Fremont had camped. Candor compels one to state that the surroundings were not those of grandeur or pomp; rather of a stern and Spartan simplicity. The State-house is still standing. Tradition states that it contained three rooms; in one the members met, in one they slept, the third contained the bar! In the course of the proceedings a motion was made to transfer the seat of government to Denver. "And we carried our point," said a most entertaining pioneer, with whom it was my good fortune to converse, "because we had the best wagon, and four mules, *and the most whiskey*. In fact," he added, sententiously, "I rather think that we had a kind of a *wagon capital* most of the time in those days."

The Colonel and the Commodore rode into Colorado City from the north one bright moonlight evening, musing on its departed glories. In the pale, glimmering light the rear view of a pretentious brick and adobe building brought faint suggestions of Syria to their minds, and the flat-roofed dwellings of Palestine. The Commodore with a pensive air drew his pencil from his pocket. Alas! another moment dispelled our visions: in this Oriental dwelling they bottle lager-beer; in a wooden building opposite they drink it (largely). I believe that "Hay and Feed" are sold in the ancient Capitol. A young lady, accompanied by a gentleman in a linen duster and wide felt hat, passed in a buggy, and was heard to ask, "Oh, ain't this real pleasant?" and a stray burro, emerging into the road, lifted up his voice in a wail that sounded like a dirge.

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THE SHEPHERDS OF COLORADO.

195

for the departed statesmen and lost greatness of Colorado City. The Commodore murmured: "*Sic transit gloria mundi*. I know that amount of Latin, anyhow;" and struck the horse viciously with the whip. Later on, he was seen drawing, with a savage expression on his face—an expression altogether indicative of vanished illusions.

But if Colorado City is a thing of the past, Colorado Springs is a bright and flourishing little city of the present. When one conceives, however, the intention of describing it, he is fain to ask himself, "What shall the man do that cometh after the king?" Not only has the special correspondent bankrupted himself in adjectives long ago, but, as is well known, a charming lady writer, whose praise is in all the book review columns, has established her home in a pretty vine-clad house on a pleasant street in the town itself, and made due and varied record of her impressions and experiences. The colony (for such it is, and containing



MOVING THE CAPITAL.

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UNDER THE ROSE.

now some 4000 souls) lies on a little narrow-gauge railroad, starting at Denver, running at present to Southern Colorado and San Juan, and destined and confidently expected, say its friends, to establish its ultimate terminal station in one of those "halls of the Montezumas" of which we so often hear. It is a charm of this country that its residents are filled with a large and cheering, if somewhat vague, hopefulness, and there is no doubt that the station agent at Colorado Springs beguiles his leisure, when not selling the honest miner a ticket for El Moro or Alamosa, with roseate visions of dispatching the "City of Mexico Fast Express," and checking luggage for Chihuahua and Guaymas. The little city is undeniably growing, and it has pleasant residences, well-stocked stores, water from the mountains, and a college and gas-works in prospect. An inspection of the forms of deeds of property and of the municipal regulations will satisfy the most skeptical inquirer that the sale of beer, wines, and liquors is most strictly prohibited, unless "for medical purposes," and on the certificate of a physician. Now the Colonel knew that the town was founded by some worthy Pennsylvania Quakers, and he told the Commodore all about these regulations, and how rigid and effective they were; but he regretted to notice a tendency on the part of the latter worthy to disbelieve some of the statements made to him, especially since his visit to Colorado City. He made a remark, common to naval men, about "telling that to the marines," and went out. In a short time he returned, and

with a growing cynicism of manner proceeded to demonstrate, with as much mathematical exactness as if working up his longitude or "taking a lunar," that the support of the number of drug stores which he had seen would involve the furnishing to each able-bodied inhabitant of a *per diem* allowance of two average prescriptions, one and one-half tooth-brushes, three glasses of soda (with syrup), five yards of sticking-plaster, and a bottle of perfumery. He also muttered something about this being "too thin." During that evening he was missed from his accustomed haunts, and in the morning placed in the Colonel's hands a sketch which he said was given him by a wicked young man whom he had met in the street. It purported to represent a number of people partaking of beer in a place which bore no resemblance to a druggist's shop; but as the Colonel knew very well that such practices were prohibited in the town, he assured his friend that it must have been taken in some other place.

Colorado Springs it was that killed poor Colorado City, only about three miles to the westward, and all that is left to the latter is the selling of lager-beer in serene lawlessness, while the former is the county town, and has a court-house, and a fine school building of light-colored stone, and a hotel very pleasantly situated in view of the mountains. Down from the Divide comes the Monument Creek, joining, just below the town, the Fontaine qui Bouille, which we shall by-and-by see at Manitou, and away up in the Ute Pass. Along the wide central street or avenue (and what fine names they have!—Cascade, Willamette, Tejon, Nevada, and Huerfano), and up the grade toward the pass and the South Park, go the great canvas-covered four-mule teams, bound, "freighting," for Fairplay, Leadville, and "the Gunnison." But we must go five miles northwest (the Commodore *would* ride his burro Montezuma, and the Colonel positively refused, and took a horse), and climb Austin's Bluffs, and look out. To the north rises the Divide, nearly as high above the sea as Sherman, on the Union Pacific Railroad. Westward the great mountains seem to have taken on thousands of feet in height, and to loom up with added grandeur. Away at the south, whither the course of the Fontaine is marked by the line of cottonwood-trees, are seen the

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THE SHEPHERDS OF COLORADO.

197

Sierra Mojada, and on a clear day, the Spanish Peaks: and to the eastward stretch, across two States, and afar to the Missouri, the great "plains."

It was to this pleasant region that the Colonel and the Commodore, after their researches, already chronicled, among the cattle ranches farther south, had come in search of fresh fields and pastures new; and they were not long in discovering that El Paso County was famed for its sheep, and the quality of its wool product. It stretches from a point well over the range, out toward the Kansas line some seventy-two miles, and from the Divide on the north well down toward Pueblo; and there are between 150,000 and 200,000 head of sheep returned as held this year within its borders. Although in many respects the sheep business is less attractive than that of cattle-raising, it deserves attention as an important and growing industry, and it is doing very much for the prosperity of the country. There is, to be sure, something exciting, and, in a sense, romantic, about the steer and his breeding, while the

sheep is a quiet and modest animal. One can fancy the broad-hatted "cow-boy" on his fleet horse, and throwing his lasso at full gallop, as feeling himself a kind of Spanish *toreador*, and perhaps imparting a spice of danger into the chase by flaunting a red scarf in the eyes of the lordly bull. The Mexican herder, on the other hand, plods monotonously after his flock, and all the chasing is done by his shepherd dog, while I know of but one man who was ever able to find anything alarming in the nature of this simple animal. This worthy, desiring a supply of mutton for his table, shot one of his neighbor's sheep, and was overtaken by the owner while carrying it away on his shoulder.

"Now I've caught you, you rascal," said he. "What do you mean by shooting my sheep?"

Sternly and grimly replied the accused: "I'll shoot any man's sheep that *tries to bite me!*"

But the gentle sheep does not lack friends and adherents, especially in El Paso County. It may here be stated that between the flock and the herd there is



FLOCK ON AUSTIN'S BLUFFS.

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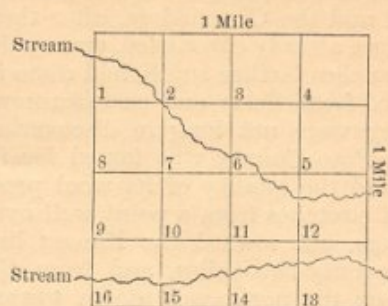
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an irrepressible conflict. The sheep puts in a mild plaint to the effect that when he is nibbling away at the grass in company with his relations and friends, the steer comes in with a party and "stampedes" him, and sets him running so far away that sometimes he can not find his way back; also that the steer stands a long time in the water, and tramples about there, and makes it so muddy that he (whose cleanly habits are well known) is debarred from drinking. He further deposes that while he stays at home, on his master's range, the steer is a first-class tramp, and roams about, trying to get meals from the neighbors. To this the steer disdainfully replies that no well-bred cattle can associate with such mud-sills as sheep, and that the latter gnaw the grass so close that there would be nothing left for him in any case. It is a clear instance of "incompatibility of temperament," and a separation has generally to be effected.

Sheep are kept in many parts of Colorado, but they have a special hold on this county, and have done a good deal in the way of dispossessing the cattle, the taking up and inclosure of water privileges tending materially to that end. This county affords a favorable opportunity for studying the life and work of the shepherd, for although there may be more sheep in some of the others, the wool from this neighborhood commands a high price, and it is claimed that the growth of grass and weeds here is particularly suitable for food.

The public lands of the United States are divided into two classes—those held at the usual price of \$1 25 per acre, and those which lie in sections alternate with railroad lands, and are consequently put at \$2 50. It is on the cheaper ones that the prospective sheep-owner wishes to settle, and his first object is to find that one great and important requisite—water. He examines the county map, and finds the public domain laid out in "townships" measuring six miles each way. Each township is divided into thirty-six "sections" of 640 acres each, and these again into "quarter sections" of 160 acres. Of a quarter section the whole, three-quarters, one-half, or one-quarter (the minimum) can be had in one of various ways. The sheep man finds a stream, which we will suppose to run in one of the two courses shown on the diagram, which rep-

resents a section of 640 acres. In the case of the lower stream his plan is simple. The law requires that his plots of forty acres each shall touch along one



side, and plots Nos. 13, 14, 15, and 16 will give him 160 acres and a mile of water frontage. In the former case, after taking No. 1, he must take either No. 2 or No. 8 (containing no water) in order to secure Nos. 6 and 7. This land can be had in different ways. In the first place, there are sales held by the government, at which any amount, great or small, down to the minimum, and within the offerings, can be taken by the highest bidder; and portions offered and not sold can be taken subsequently at \$1 25 per acre. Next, each man can "preempt" 160 acres, *i. e.*, give notice that he is going to take it up, and receive patent at the end of either six or thirty months, for \$1 25 per acre and fees. Next, again, he can occupy 160 acres under the Homestead Law, and having actually lived on it for five years, secure title, paying only fees—a fact which is respectfully commended to the attention of Socialist orators. But there may not be "offered lands" which suit our friend; and although he may have his 320 acres, and be debarred from singing,

"No foot of land do I possess,
No dwelling in the wilderness,"

he may require much more, and find no man who wants to sell out to him. Now Uncle Sam gave the soldiers in the civil war the right to 160 acres each, only requiring them to take them up and live thereon five years, from which, up to four years, was deducted the time of their military service. Some of the boys in blue only took up portions, and the Solons at Washington then said that they should not suffer for this, and that "scrip" should issue to each one for the forty, eighty, or 120 acres which he had failed to take

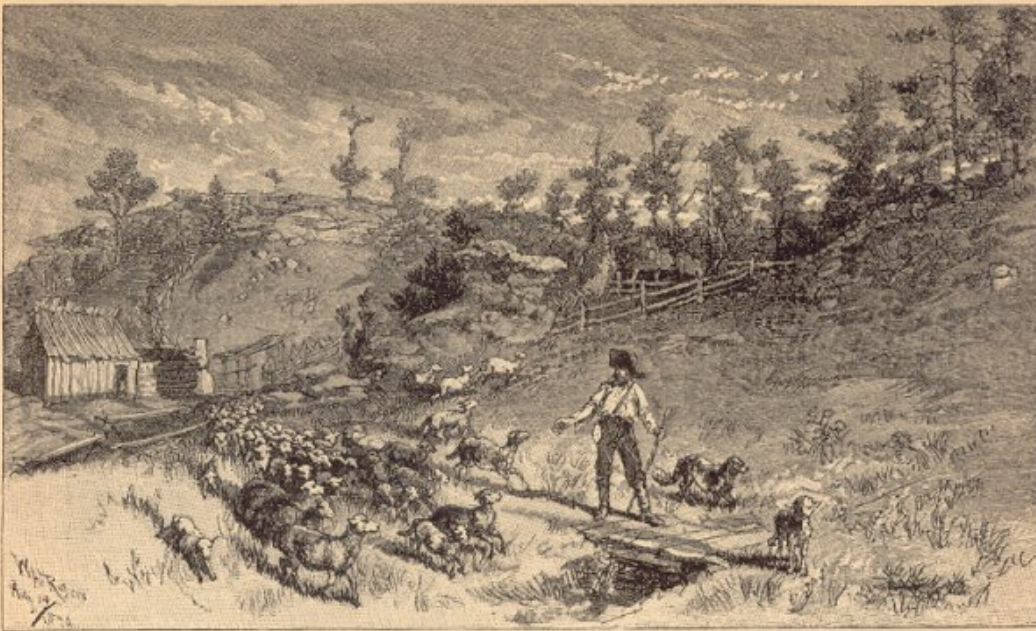
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OFF FOR THE RANGE.

up. The beauty of this and other scrip, such as "Louisiana," "Sioux half-breed," etc., is that it can be bought, and the purchaser can locate, in forty-acre parcels, where he pleases. Thus, by paying perhaps at the rate of \$3 50 per acre for scrip, our sheep man can secure plots Nos. 11 and 12, and more in that direction, also perhaps a nice spring near by, and, what he most wants, land along another water-course three to five miles away. Between, therefore, his two water frontages his sheep can roam, for no one will take up this waterless tract. Between him and his next neighbor there is a courteous understanding that each shall use half the space. Then up go his wire or post-and-rail fences around the springs; perhaps some more divergent water-courses are secured; and now

"He is monarch of all he surveys,
His right there is none to dispute."

Next our shepherd must purchase his sheep; and here come in a good many honest differences of opinion as to the kind which will give the best results. Some will buy cheap "Mexicans," expecting to breed a better quality of lambs, and then dispose of the original purchase. Others affect the California stock, which, of late years, has come into favor in some quarters. The weight of opinion, however, would undoubtedly incline our en-

terprising young *ranchero* to buy sheep on the spot in good condition, and, what is very important, thoroughly acclimated. His "bucks" (say about three to each hundred ewes) will generally be Merinos. In the autumn, we will say, then, he begins operations under favorable auspices. His cabin is very plainly furnished, and his "corrals," or yards and sheds, properly constructed and in readiness. For feeding in stormy weather he has enough hay safely stored away; and after due care and inquiry, he has secured an experienced and competent herder—better an American. At daylight all hands are called to breakfast, and soon after the bleating flock are moving over the range, and the herder, with his canteen slung over his shoulder, and probably a book in his pocket, has whistled to his shepherd dog and started after them. During the whole day they graze on the short grass, going once to water; and afternoon sees them brought back near to the corrals, in which, later on, they are again confined for the night. Day after day, week after week, month after month, pass in monotonous round; and then the cold weather comes, and the herder puts on a thicker coat, and reads less, and walks about rapidly, and stamps his feet for warmth. And then some day, when he is far away from the ranch, there comes on that dreaded enemy of sheep-raising

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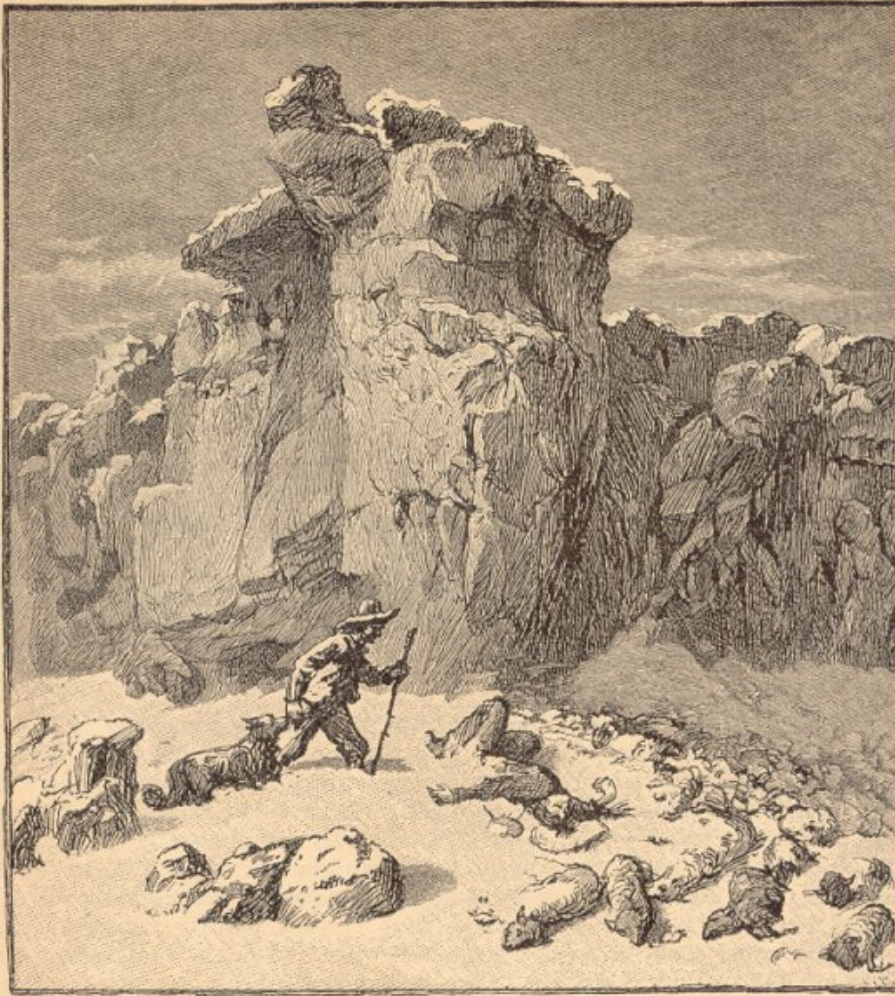
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200

HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.



THE TRAGEDY OF THE BIG CORRAL.

—a prairie snow-storm. With but little warning the clouds have gathered, and the snow is falling in thick and heavy flakes. The sheep hurriedly huddle together, and no power can make them move. The herder may have had time to get them into a gulch, or under a bank; failing in this, there is nothing for it but to stay with them, sometimes a day and a night, and trust to getting them home when the storm is over. Not far from Colorado Springs is a gulch called the Big Corral, in which more than one thousand sheep were lost a year or two ago, having followed each other up to the brink, and fallen over into the deep snow. Nor did the Mexican herder ever return to tell the tale, for he shared their fate. It is with the snow-storm, indeed, that the dark side of the Colorado shepherd's life is associated, and the great tempest of the

spring of 1878 left a sorrowful record behind it. It must be mentioned that sheds are an innovation, that some ranches have none even now, and that before they were built the sheep were exposed, even in the corrals, to the fury of the elements. *Per contra*, it should be said that no such storm as that of March, 1878, has been known since there were any sheep in this part of the country. On this occasion thousands and thousands of sheep perished. The snow was eleven feet deep in the corrals, and sheep were dug out *alive* after being buried for two and even three weeks! Their vitality seems very great, and many perish, not from the pressure of the snow, but from suffocation caused by others falling or crowding upon them. It is asserted that they sometimes, while still buried, work their way down to the grass, and feed thereon. But our shep-

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Hits: 10886

THE SHEPHERDS OF COLORADO.

201

herd has taken care to have plenty of sheds, and he knows, too, that by the doctrine of chances he need not count on such a storm more than once in ten years, and he faces the winter with a stout heart. Whenever it is possible to send the sheep out, the herder takes them, despite the weather; but when that is impossible or indiscreet, they are fed at home.

In May comes "lambing," and the extra hands are busily occupied in taking care of the young lambs. With their mothers, they are separated from the rest of the flock, first in small "bunches," then in larger ones; and in October they are weaned. In June comes shearing—an easy and simple operation; and, if need be, "dipping," or immersing the stock in great troughs containing a solution of tobacco or lime, cures the "scab," and completes the year's programme. Our shepherd sells his wool, counts the increase of his flock after weaning, and if, as is to be hoped, he is a good book-keeper, he sits down and makes up his accounts for the year. It is hard to picture a greater contrast than that which exists between the sheep and the cattle business, the freedom and excitement of the latter bearing about the same relation to the humdrum routine of the former as does the appearance of the great herd of often noble-looking animals widely scattered over the plains, and roaming sometimes for months by themselves, to that of the timid flock bleating in the corral, and frightened at the waving of a piece of white paper. And then to think of the difference between the life of the "cow-puncher" (as he calls himself), riding his spirited horse in the company of his fellows, and that of the herder, on foot and in solitude, is enough to make us wonder how men can be found for the one, while there is the slightest chance of securing the other. And yet there are many such men, and the Colonel and the Commodore saw and talked with them.

It was through the courtesy and kindness of Mr. J. F. Atherton, of Colorado Springs, that we were first enabled to see something for ourselves of the life and operations on sheep ranches. We drove out of the town on a bright morning, and north and east over the prairie. On the

front seat sat our guide, philosopher, and friend—a young man of a dry humor, and gifted with a faculty of forcible and incisive expression. Far off in the direction in which we were going rose a high ridge which we must surmount before reaching our destination, and twenty-two miles must be scored off before we could hope for dinner at a small road-side ranch. Had the road been twice as long, the flow of anecdotes from our friend would have made it short enough. First we had a sprightly account of some of the manners and customs of the colony which we had left behind us.

"Temperance town? Not much. If a man wants his beer, all he's got to do is to sign his name in a book, and get a certificate of membership in a beer club, and



SHEARING.

then he's a share-holder—blamed if he ain't—and they can't stop him from drinking his own beer!"

"You've seen old —, haven't you? Didn't you know that they run him for Senator—just put up a job on him, you know. Blamed if he didn't think he was going to be elected. The boys got a two-wheeled cart, with a little runt of a burro in the shafts, and an everlasting great long pole sticking out in front with a bunch of hay tied to the end. (You see, the burro was just a-reaching out for that

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THE PRAIRIE POST-OFFICE.

hay, and that was the only way they could get him to go.) Blamed if the old chap didn't ride round in that outfit, all dressed up in a kind of uniform with gold epaulets, and two fellows behind, one beating a big drum, and the other blowing away at a cornet. He was the worst-looking pill that you ever saw, and dog-goned if he didn't put it up that he was going to be elected *sure*. Well, that night the boys hired a hall; and when he come out to address them, they made such a noise that you couldn't hear a word, and then, in about five minutes, there come a cabbage, and took him alongside of the head, and then eggs, and potatoes, and I don't know what. And when the election come, he had just one blamed vote, and he cast that himself."

"Rain? No; I guess not. But when I was in Pueblo last time—that's the blamedest town, ain't it?—I was caught in a storm, and it turned into hail, and before I got to the hotel, blamed if I didn't turn round three times to see who was throwing stones at me!"

With quaint narrations of this kind, made doubly comical by that manner of telling which the hearer must despair of reproducing, the miles slipped away, until the earth-roofed log-cabin came in sight at which dinner was to be had. At a

short distance therefrom we saw the white tents of a party from the United States Geodetic Survey. In one of them we found the cook hard at work baking bread and cake, and engaged him in friendly converse. He informed us that in the matter of pay he came next to the chief, and from the account which he gave of the appetites of the party, we were disposed to think that he was earning his stipend. It may be that it was only because our charioteer judged all occupations by contrast with the hardships of sheep-raising, but we found him inclined to underrate the labors of the surveyors, and he told us that they "had a soft thing."

While we were dining, a man who was sitting near us quietly remarked that he had just lost twelve hundred sheep. With the most perfect nonchalance he went on to say that he and his "pard" had only just come to the country and bought the sheep, that he was driving the wagon, and that his pard, who was behind with the flock, was ill, and lay down, and missed them. To those who know what a showing a body of twelve hundred sheep will make on the plains, this will seem rather like a fish than a sheep story, but it was quite true. Our companions made a show of offering sympathy and advice, but, in confidential converse with us, spoke with a certain lofty disdain of the "tender-feet" (Coloradoan for new-comers), and their efforts to find their lost stock. Nor did they change their tone when the poor man said that he was too tired to search any more, but would pay men to do it for him; and it was left for the Colonel and the Commodore—painfully conscious as they were that, despite their exalted military and naval rank, they were also "tender-feet"—to feel for the sufferers.

Resuming our journey, and after passing a notice of the lost sheep, and a primitive prairie post-office, consisting of a small box on a pole, in which the "cow-punchers' letters were quite as safe as in any of Uncle Sam's iron receptacles, we met the pard, his long legs dangling on each side of a small broncho, and a calm and happy smile on his face. We made sure that he had found his little flock, and his assurance that he had not seen anything of them elicited the remark from our companions that he "took it mighty easy." It may give some idea of the character and sparse population of this country to mention that these sheep, lost on Thurs-

Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

Category: Colorado Springs History

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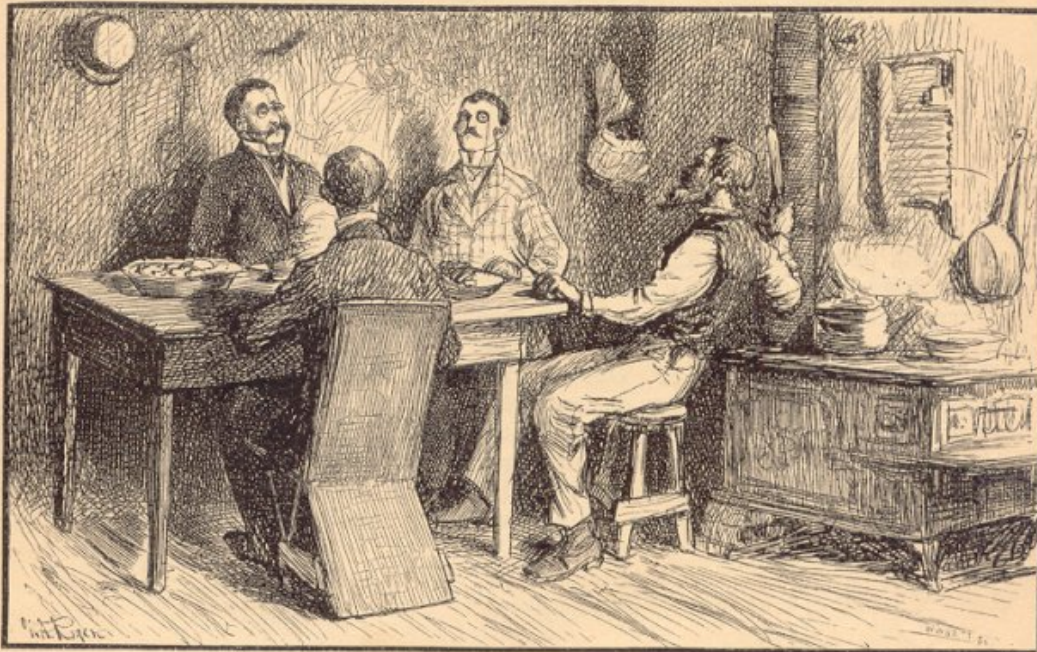
Written by Super User

Hits: 10886

day night, were found on Sunday, thirty miles away, less some seventy killed by gray wolves and coyotes.

A few hours later, ascending the hill which had loomed up before us all day, we entered a little valley, and came to Mr. Atherton's ranch—a representative one for this region. There were a small cabin, a stable, sheds, a pump at the spring, three corrals connected by "shoots," or

particular occasion, no one could complain; nor is "apple-butter" to be altogether despised. *Que voulez-vous?* If you sigh for the flesh-pots of Delmonico, you ought to have staid in New York, or at least gotten into the good graces of the cook of the Survey party. And, after all, these things are a matter of taste and habit. A genial traveller, whose brilliant sketches used often to appear in



SUPPER WITH THE HERDER.

narrow passages, and a curious swinging gate for throwing the sheep into alternate divisions. A more lonely place it is hard to imagine. The short greenish-yellow grass stretched to the horizon on all four sides, and not even a tree or a shrub was to be seen. Before long a few sheep came in sight, then more, then hundreds, and then the herder, in a long dingy canvas coat, walking with a swinging stride. Smoke, meantime, was coming out of the iron stove-pipe in the cabin roof, and the herder was busy, as soon as the sheep were safe in the corrals, in preparing the supper. The ranchman does not feel inclined to say, with the late Mr. Motley, "Give me the luxuries of life, and I'll dispense with the necessities." On the other hand, he treats luxuries with a pronounced disdain, but is not without certain comforts. Of the herder's home-made bread and roast mutton, on this

these pages, remarked to the writer, when engaged in the discussion of a particularly good dinner: "But you know that this formality, this elaborate cooking, these courses, are all barbarism. True civilization is to be found in the Colorado Desert, where one fries his salt pork on a ramrod, and goes his way rejoicing."

We heard rumors of ranch cabins wherein a third room was added to the one in which the occupants eat and sleep and the kitchen; but we saw them not, and were yet content. And after the knife had been duly sharpened on the stove-pipe, and the mutton carved, and the tin porringers of tea served out to all, we cultivated the acquaintance of the herder, and a remarkable character he proved to be. The first words that we heard him speak settled his nationality, for, on being told that the owner of the twelve hundred sheep wanted a man to

Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

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Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

Category: Colorado Springs History

Published: Thursday, 29 January 2009 19:47

Written by Super User

Hits: 10886

204

HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.



MORNING AT THE RANCH.

search for them, he sententiously remarked, "Hi'm 'is 'uckleberry." Then his conversation flowed on in a steady stream:

"I was in the British harmy. Left there? Yes; deserted. Then I was in the United States harmy twice. Used to shoot two or three Indians every day, me and two other good fellers. I didn't have no hard duty. Was the pet of the regiment. Then I was brakeman on a railroad. Oh yes, I have been in all

kinds' of business. I'm the champion walker for five hundred yards. Lost \$700 of my own money on a bet last winter. Leadville? Yes; I've worked in the — mine. You bet it's the best one there. Lively place? That's so. I used to work all day in the mine, and spar in the theatre at night for twenty dollars per week. You bet they've got the *fat-test* grave-yard in the country in Leadville. A pard of mine saw twelve fel-



Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

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Hits: 10886

lers dragged out in one night. Been to Hengland lately? Oh yes. Made \$1600 in two weeks. Why do I herd sheep at twenty dollars per month? Oh, just for my health. System's kind of run down. I tell you a feller can just make money in this country, but *he's got to have sand.*" (It must be explained that "sand"—one of the happiest and most forcible expressions in the whole vocabulary of Western slang—means dogged resolution, or what we call "grit.")

Neither the Colonel nor the Commodore approves of very early rising, but, the next morning, determining to "assume a virtue if they had it not," they said that it was very pleasant to breakfast at 5.30. Then they saw the sheep run through the shoot to be counted, giving long leaps as they cleared it, and, as soon as the gates of the corral were opened, tumbling over each other as they rushed out to find the grass; and their last sight of the herder, as he stepped off, vividly recalled the atmosphere of Madison Square Garden and the feats of Rowell and O'Leary.

Then again we went to visit the ranch of a resident of Bijou Basin—a pretty valley on the Divide—with a pleasant house in the village, and 8000 sheep in ample corrals just over the first hilly ridge. As we drove into this curious little village it seemed steeped in a sleepy atmosphere most strongly suggestive of Rip Van Winkle. Two stores out of three were closed as we passed them; and when we came back, and found one open, the proprietor rose from his bed to make a small sale. The keeper of the second also reclined on a couch of ease, and the third store—Dick's—remained obstinately closed.

"Blamed if I ever see a day seem so like Sunday," said our cicerone. "If I had to live here, I'd just *bottle up and die.*"

"Dick's got some beer in his shop," charitably suggested the second store-keeper, again gracefully stretched on his counter. "He ain't there a great deal,

but he 'most always leaves the key at the blacksmith's."

With a singular unanimity a move was made to the establishment of that artisan, whose sturdy blows on an iron wedge were the first signs of life in the place. Two villagers were watching him; the three new-comers joined them; then three residents came up on horseback, and swelled the throng. The blacksmith had no key, and Dick had gone away. The Colonel and the Commodore felt the somnolent influence coming on them; in common with six other able-bodied men,



THE SLEEPY STORE-KEEPER OF BIJOU BASIN.

their sole interest in life seemed to be the completion of that wedge, and only the ring of the hammer saved them from the fate of the sleepers of Ephesus. Suddenly there was a cry, "Dick is coming!" and everything was changed. The blacksmith remarked that he "must wash down that wedge before he made another," and when Dick arrived he took the key from him and opened the door. Then some-

Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

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body said "Beer," and the majority of the residents of Bijou Basin held a town-meeting in the store: Dick's coming, like that of the prince in the tale of the *Sleeping Beauty*, had completely broken the spell.

After a talk with our new host, and an inspection of his flocks and corrals and some of the operations in progress, we concluded that no better place could be found than Bijou Basin (where, as an exceptional thing, the family home has replaced the cabin, and the school-house is close to the ranch) wherein to rest a while, and carefully compile some figures, which the reader, unless he intends becoming a shepherd, can readily skip. They apply to the case of a man with capital, coming out, not to take up or preempt land, but to buy a ranch ready to his hand.

Such a one, capable of accommodating

5000 head of sheep, could be had, say, for \$4000, comprising at least three claims three to five miles apart, also proper cabins, corrals, etc. A flock of 2000 assorted ewes, two to three years old, should be bought at an average of \$3 each, say \$6000; and 60 bucks at an average of \$30, or \$1800. A pair of mules and a saddle-horse will cost \$275; and we allow for working capital \$1925. Capital invested, say, October 1, \$14,000.

Under ordinarily favorable circumstances, and with great care, one may expect during May his lambs, and estimate that there will be alive of them at time of weaning a number equal to seventy-five per cent. of his ewes, or, say, 1500, on the 1st of October, a year from time of beginning operations.

His gross increase of values and receipts will then be, for that year, as follows:

1500 lambs (average one-half ewes, one-half wethers), at \$2 each	\$3000 00	
In June he will shear his wool, and get from:		
2000 ewes, 5 pounds each, or 10,000 pounds, at 21 cents	\$2100 00	
60 bucks, 17 pounds each, or 1000 pounds, at 15 cents	150 00	2250 00
		<u>\$5250 00</u>

Expenses:

Herders, teamsters, cook, and provisions	\$1835 00	
Shearing 2060 sheep, at 6 cents	123 60	
Hay and grain	275 00	
		<u>\$2233 60</u>

Losses (all estimated as made up, in money):

Ewes, 4 per cent. on \$6000	\$240 00	
Bucks, 5 per cent. on \$1800	90 00	330 00

Depreciation:

On bucks, 5 per cent. on \$1800	90 00	2653 60
Net profits for first year		<u>\$2596 40</u>

SECOND YEAR.

The 1500 lambs will be a year older, and worth an additional 15 per cent. (or 15 per cent. on \$3000)	\$450 00	
1500 new lambs will be worth, as before	3000 00	
And there will be of wool from		
2000 sheep, 5 pounds each, or 10,000 pounds, at 21 cents	\$2100 00	
1500 lambs, 4 pounds each, or 6000 pounds, at 21 cents	1260 00	
60 bucks, 17 pounds each, or 1000 pounds, at 15 cents	150 00	3510 00
		<u>\$6960 00</u>

Expenses:

Herders, etc.	\$2060 00	
Shearing 3560 sheep, at 6 cents	213 60	
Hay and grain	350 00	
		<u>\$2623 60</u>

Losses:

On ewes, 4 per cent. on \$6000	\$240 00	
On bucks, 5 per cent. on \$1800	90 00	
On lambs, 7 per cent. on \$3000	210 00	540 00

Depreciation:

On ewes, 5 per cent. on \$6000	\$300 00	
On bucks, 5 per cent. on \$1800	90 00	390 00
Net profits for second year		<u>\$3406 40</u>

THIRD YEAR.

The second year's lambs will be worth an additional 15 per cent., or, say (15 per cent. on \$3000).	\$450 00	
There will be 1500 lambs from original 2000 ewes, and, say, from new 750 ewes (one-half of 1500), not more than 60 per cent. in first lambing, or, say, 450—in all, 1950 lambs, at \$2 ...	3900 00	

Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

Category: Colorado Springs History

Published: Thursday, 29 January 2009 19:47

Written by Super User

Hits: 10886

THE SHEPHERDS OF COLORADO.

207

Wool will be:

From 3500 ewes, 5½ pounds each, or 19,250 pounds, at 21 cents	\$4042 50	
From 1950 lambs, 4 pounds each, or 7800 pounds, at 21 cents	1638 00	
From 60 bucks, 17 pounds each, or 1000 pounds, at 15 cents	150 00	5830 50
		<u>\$10,180 50</u>

Expenses:

Herders and fodder	\$2970 00	
Shearing 5510 sheep, at 6 cents	330 60	
New corrals, etc.	300 00	
		<u>\$3600 60</u>

Losses:

On ewes, 4 per cent. on \$6000	\$240 00	
On new sheep, 4 per cent. on \$4500	180 00	
On lambs, 7 per cent. on \$3000	210 00	
On bucks, 5 per cent. on \$1800	90 00	720 00

Depreciation:

On old ewes, 10 per cent. on \$6000	\$600 00	
On bucks, 20 per cent. on \$1800	360 00	960 00
		<u>5280 60</u>
Net profits for third year		<u>\$4899 90</u>

RECAPITULATION.

First year's profits	\$2596 40
Second year's profits	3406 40
Third year's profits	4899 90
Total	<u>\$10,902 70</u>

This statement would probably meet with scant favor from an "old-timer," who would confidently assert that he can "run" a flock of 5000 sheep, year in and year out, at an average cost of fifty cents per head. Such a one (and there are many of them) has perhaps lived twenty years in this part of the country, and tried many kinds of business. He is deeply attached to the soil, and knows no other home. He has spent years and years, it may be, in the mountains, prospecting and mining, and while he may like a soft bed and a tight roof and a good dinner as well as his neighbor, there have been epochs in his life when they, or any one of them, would be no nearer his reach than the joys of a Mohammedan paradise, and "he counteth none of these things dear" when his mind is set on the accomplishment of any object. When this man takes up the business of sheep-raising, he is in dead earnest. At the beginning, at least, he knows nothing, thinks of nothing, but sheep; lives among them, studies and masters every detail of their management, and institutes a rigid and searching economy. He will have good sheep, good corrals, and probably good sheds; but he will care little for comforts in his cabin, and it is well known that one of the most successful sheep men in this region began by living in a *cave* in the bluffs near Colorado Springs. To loneliness the old-timer is a stranger, and very possibly early habits have made him

prefer a solitary life. His herder will most assuredly give good value for his wages, and will do exactly as he is told, and know that the master's eye is on him.

"Yes, he was a good herder, when he wanted to be," remarked an old-timer, "but he liked to be boss, and so did I, and there couldn't very well be two."

His pencil would be busy with the foregoing estimates, and if such as he were the only ones to engage in the business, then indeed might they be modified.

On the other hand, we will suppose the case of the young man in the East whose health will, he thinks, be improved by a residence in Colorado, or who fairly believes himself inclined and suited to face a life on the plains, "with all that that implies." This ideal personage, *if* (and that word must be italicized in mind as well as on paper) he is wise, and wisely advised, will come out on a preliminary visit. He will live for some time on a ranch, and make up his mind how the life and the business will suit him; also, if an invalid, will he most carefully, and with good medical advice to aid him, notice the effect on his health. He will not underrate the monotony of the existence, the isolation, the dead level of the year's progress; and unless he be exceptionally constituted, small blame to him if he invite his hosts to a good dinner, propose their very good health and overflowing prosperity, bid them good-by, shake off the dust of his feet on sheep ranches,

Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

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Written by Super User

Hits: 10886

and betake himself either to some other avocation in Colorado, or to the nearest railway station where he can catch the Eastern express. But, perhaps, wisely counting the cost, he remains until he has thoroughly learned the business, then leases before he buys, and then launches boldly out as a full-fledged shepherd. It will not be necessary to recall to him or his kind the old, old truth, the cardinal axiom, that there is no royal road to business success of any sort; and that in Colorado, just as in New York, or London, or Calcutta, or Constantinople, there is no hope for him without economy and industry and strict personal attention, and that, even with them, the fates may be sometimes against him.

To such a one, then, are these figures respectfully submitted, showing returns of something like twenty-five per centum per annum. Comparing them with those previously given in these pages about cattle, he sees that the latter promise him larger but more tardy returns, while the former show smaller requirements in the way of adequate capital, and his wool is a yearly cash asset. As regards variety and attractiveness, and in any æsthetic sense, the poor sheep must clearly go to the wall in the comparison, and the steer be elected to the place of honor "by a large majority."

It may here be properly remarked that good men can almost always find employment as subordinates, and ought to learn the business quickly, and perhaps do well for themselves.

"I wanted a man to herd sheep," said, for instance, an old-timer in the hearing of the writer, "and I met one coming out of Pueblo. He said that he would like to work for me. 'Look here,' said I, 'I won't pay you any wages, but I'll give you 250 lambs, which you must herd as part of mine.' He agreed to that, and worked for me three years and a half, and until he had to go away and be married, and then I bought him out. The wool had paid all expenses, and he had \$2250 coming to him in cash."

Nor would it be impossible for a hard-working man, with a very much smaller sum at his command than that assumed in the figures, to purchase a few sheep and make a beginning for himself; but, with the gradual absorption of the streams and springs, this is becoming daily more difficult.

For the Colonel and the Commodore there was small need to conjure up ideal shepherds, for they found them in El Paso County in every conceivable variety, and heard most entertaining and veracious narratives of their manners and experiences. Successful old-timers, enjoying the results of their past labors, and clad in the sober garb of civilization, laid down the law over social cigars, while youthful beginners, with doubtful prospects, sported hats with an enormous breadth of brim, and seemed to delight in garments of dubious cut and texture and extreme antiquity. In this connection, indeed, there is room for a homily, for it may surely be said that in a new country the incomers who have enjoyed the blessings of an advanced civilization in their former homes owe it to themselves to do all in their power to translate said blessings to their adopted residence. And so, when water has come, and gas is coming to the county town of El Paso, it would be well for youthful *rancheros* to cease emulating the attire of Buffalo Bill, and make the acquaintance, when they come thither, of a tailor and a boot-black. One of two gentlemen from the Eastern States, visiting Colorado Springs, and calling upon a lady to whom the *convenances* of life were traditionally dear, apologized for the absence of his companion, whose clothes suitable for such an occasion had been delayed by the expressman.

"Only hear that!" she delightedly cried. "Why, I have been meeting the sons of dukes and earls, with their pantaloons tucked in their boots." To which the very natural reply was: "So much the worse for the sons of dukes and earls. They would not presume on such liberties in their own country, and it is high time that they were effectually taught that they shall not take them here." Indeed, there are features of the curious irruption into Colorado of scions of the nobility and aristocracy of Great Britain which are extremely interesting and amusing, and which may justly claim future attention; but at present it may simply be remarked that sheep have no regard for noble birth, and that Piccadilly seems to furnish an inadequate preparation for a successful ranchman.

Then before our observant eyes there passed other figures and faces—two gentlemen from New England, in from a distant ranch; one, after some months' hard

Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

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Written by Super User

Hits: 10886

work, to *desipere in loco* at Manitou, another to drive sheep to Las Vegas, in New Mexico, at the rate of *ten miles* per day, through the sage-brush! Next came an Englishman bearing the name of a noble family—a university man of remarkable culture, and manners befitting his birth and education, but in garb and general appearance a veritable figure of fun. Learning that after abandoning a sheep ranch of special squalor, where he had toiled to little purpose, he had been engaged for four months in driving horses up from Texas in company with some Mexican herders, a gentleman engaged him in friendly converse, and finally asked point-blank what possessed him to lead such a life. With great gentleness and courtesy he replied that he was one of Matthew Arnold's "Philistines." And thus the procession went on.

We were indebted at the last to a very lively and outspoken resident for some illustrations, given us "in dialect," of the unfavorable side of the shepherd's existence. His experience of men had not been an agreeable one, and an officer of the law appeared with unpleasant frequency at the end of the vistas of ranch life which he portrayed; but the shepherd of Colorado is not the only man who finds fatal enemies in whiskey and cards, extravagance, inattention and laziness, and stupidity.

"Didn't you never hear of —?" asked our friend. "He was the worst pill you ever see. High-toned Englishman; always 'blasting this bloody country, you know.' Come here with \$50,000; went away owing \$20,000. How is that for high? Blamed if he cared what he paid for anything! Offer him a horse worth \$40, and charge him \$150, and he'd give you a check. You bet he lived high; always set up the drinks. Didn't take long to bust him. He didn't care what he paid for his sheep. Had 2500 of them, and you used to see thirty or forty Englishmen loafing on him. You bet he didn't have the trouble of selling them sheep. *Sheriff did that for him.*"

"Then there was — —. He just put on heaps of style. Flew high, you know—regular *tony*. He started in with 600 sheep—just think of that; wouldn't pay for his cigars. He used to come into town in great style—four horses to his buggy. Then he come down to three; then two; then one. Then he had none, and had to stay on the ranch. Sheriff sold him up sharp. Then he kept a billiard saloon. You bet he busted on that, because, you see, he used to play with the boys, and always got beat. Then he was



MILOR IN FLUSH TIMES.

a-going about the streets, just everlastingly played out; and the last I see of him he was a kind of rostabout, or dish-washer, to a camping outfit. *Wouldn't that just get some of his high-toned relations up on their ear?*"

We thought that it undoubtedly would, and we thought, too, with a certain wonder, of the habit of some parents and friends of sending young men to this country who are either *mauvais sujets*, and better out of their sight, or incapacitated for competition with the keen souls whom they must meet, and then letting them shift for themselves.

But, like the recent writer on Colorado

Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

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Hits: 10886

in an English magazine, we are giving "the dark side of a bright picture;" and it was only with kindly and pleasant impressions and memories of the gentle shepherds of the plains that the Colonel and the Commodore bade them good-by, and turned their steps toward the grim cañons and lofty mountains holding in their remote fastnesses those silver and golden treasures for which most of the dwellers in this land so eagerly strive. They are kindly and hospitable, these lonely ranchmen, and no one goes hungry from their doors, or lacks a sheep-skin on which to sleep; nor are the lighter graces altogether neglected. We had heard much from one of our friends, the proprietor of a large and successful ranch, of the extraordinary gifts and quaint peculiarities of his *chef de cuisine*, and had the honor of making the acquaintance of this gentleman. His appearance suggested the Wild Hunt of Lutzow rather than the surroundings of a peaceful kitchen; but we were bound to credit his assertion that if we "would come out to the ranch he would treat us

kindly. You bet he could cook. He was just *on it*." This worthy had run through his cash, and desired to negotiate a small loan. This being effected, he proceeded to invest the funds in a bouquet, which with great courtesy and gravity he presented to his "boss" just before he galloped off. We had understood that he resembled the person of whom Mr. Harte says,

"He was a most sarcastic man, this quiet Mr. Brown,

And on several occasions he had cleaned out the town;"

and we therefore made record of this little incident as truly pastoral.

And so, as we looked back from the Ute Pass over the plains dotted with ranches away out to Kansas, the lovely lights and shadows were altogether suggestive of the vicissitudes of their occupants' career; and as an abrupt turn shut them out, we recalled admiringly the herder's epigrammatic saying: "A man can make a lot of money in the sheep business, but *he's just got to have SAND!*"



FINIS.

Sheep Herding and Englishmen in El Paso County

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