

THEIR LAST RIDE

By ETHEL S. PHILLIPS

EMERGING from behind the sheltering walls of the canyon, the team settled into a five-mile gait. The wagon rattled and rumbled over the hard surface of the mesa road that lay like a pale snake across the land, keeping ever to the tops of the ridges, curving to avoid arroyos, yet always descending gradually across the vast expanse of the foothills to the green valley of the Rio Grande.

Each mile of the road, bordered with ever-recurring patches of mesquite, soap weed and creosote, was like every other mile; perhaps differing in the minor detail of spacing, yet disclosing no variation.

Like the never-changing, ever-changing aspect of the country, were the two men who occupied the seat of the wagon. Differing as one man from another, yet alike as a type; lean, grizzled and bronzed; as typical of the cow country as the sparse vegetation of the long dry and barren plains skirting the better pasturage of the canyons and higher reaches of the foothills.

In the wagon box, inanimate as the water barrel, the battered pillow and the sack of feed which shared its bed, lay a slight, stark object wrapped in a gray blanket. The blanket was wet, and the air immediately above its gruesome folds, was cooler than would seem possible under the brazen glare of the climbing sun.

The increasing heat of the open road, thrust itself interruptingly upon the silence of the two men.

Jim Riley looked restlessly behind him and then at the other man whom he addressed.

"Funny notion some folks get about dynin', ain't it? As if it made any difference what becomes of the bank book after you've cashed in your checks. Seems like the more civilized an' Christianized folks get, the more onerous they is in their notions about bein' buried. It's plumb foolish shippin' dead folks back home."

"Does seem foolish, but I reckon it's a slight of comfort to their folks," said Porter, slapping the lines along the horses' backs.

"Well, that's what I'm gettin' at. Take this chap; he ain't been home for three years; it ain't like they hadn't gotten used to livin' without him. Why, since he's been to the ranch, he ain't written home oftener'n once a month. They've gotten over runnin' to the door every time the postman comes. See? Suppose we'd jest written to 'em tellin' 'em that he died peaceful an' easy like, never knowin' it was comin' till the end, leavin' out the fear that looked out of his eyes when he tasted blood on his lips, an' that he was lyin' out here in the foothills, in the open, where he died, with a grand old mountain for his everlastin' monument. Wouldn't that've been better'n this? An' this ain't all, 'tho I reckon it's the worst. It's a long ways back to Tennessee in a baggage car. No sir-ee, none of it fer me!"

"If I'm lucky enough to get mine in the open, let me lay right there in a hole, close by, with a half a continent a-rollin' down hill in front of me. That's big enough fer me. I want to lay where I die an' my boots on," Riley ended. Then shifting in his seat he raised a restraining hand.

Porter brought the team to a halt. Riley jumped to the road and went to the back of the wagon. "Lord, but it's hot," he said gravely, dipping the pall into the barrel and dashing water over the stark form wrapped in the gray blanket.

Presently the wagon moved on again. Drop after drop the water fell from the cracks in the wagon bed, only to be absorbed by the dust-dry atmosphere, almost before it reached the burning gravel.

"Poor boy, I bet he'd never have asked us to try to get him to El Paso in time if he'd have known what the heat means on a job like this—an' I'm not knowin' yet, that we'll be in time. Seems like this is hotter weather 'n common."

"We can't do no more'n to try," Porter said. "I felt like tellin' him it wasn't no use, but his eyes looked so kinda hungry, an' he spent the last breath he had longin' for home—him a lyin' there lookin' out at the sunrise over beyond the Sacramento's."

"Sure, we're doin' the only thing we can do, but it's almighty tough."

At noon the drooping horses demanded a rest. The men climbed down and made camp. True to their cowboy training, they had made no provision for themselves, but the horses were fed and watered and rested for an hour. Fed and watered and rested by the burning, unsheltered roadside, but fanned by a merciful breeze.

Porter took a folded blanket from the wagon seat and threw it over a couple of mesquite bushes; it cast a narrow strip of shade and the two men, seeking this, stretched out in the hot sun.

"Poor devil," Riley said, watching the drip of the water under the wagon. "Died like a Christian an' a sport, an' then—this"

"Well, it's what he wanted, an' I reckon that's all the livin' can do fer the dead"

"You bet," Riley replied laconically.

"V. see" he was an exile, an' these

great old plains with the lights an' the shades a-changin' an' a-changin' in the moonlight an' under the stars, they wasn't filled with nothin' fer him but loneliness. Y' remember him a-sayin' some poetry, out of a magazine, about 'lookin' out on the sage brush an' stretchin' yearnin' hands, an' the long unbroken reaches of th' desert's burnin' sands? Well, that's what this country was to him—a desert. Now, you an' me, we're used to the bligens an' we don't call it lonesome, it's the land of memories to us, jest like Tennessee was the land of memories to him—an' that's what a man hankers fer, I reckon, when he comes to the great divide. Like a little kid a-wantin' of his mother, a man's a-wantin' of his home."

Riley raised on his elbow: "Yep, you're right, all right, an' I'm hopin' by the Eternal, that we'll beat time to the undertaker's. Let's drag it, what d'you say? Gosh, but those birds up there, is gettin' on my nerves."

Porter opened his eyes and looked, out and above, into the blue of the sky where vagrant clouds, like drifts of snow, were drifting from the west. There, soaring on lazy wing, circling, sailing, drifting on the wind, gaunt buzzards watched afar.

When again upon the road, the two men lapsed into silence. Each time that Riley dipped the battered pall into the lowering water in the barrel, his soul grew sick within him, and each time, as he regained his seat, he muttered: "Lord, I hope I'll die in the open but I want they should dig me a hole before them varmints, up there, gets onto my job."

So the hours passed; passed with the changing shadows on the hills; when one was gone, another followed, and hours and shadows alike seemed without end.

Finally the smoke of El Paso could be seen, a faint cloud floating above graveled hills.

"We're on the last lap now, Riley, but I'm afraid the old gray blanket will be his shroud, poor chap, and when they screws the lid down here, it'll stay down till the last trumpet. We've done our best but the sun's goin' to beat us to it. I'm not wantin' to take no more rides like this."

"Nor me. I liked this chap fine, but I'll not be sorry to say good-by, this time," Riley said brusquely. He was standing on the back wheel, ready to jump into the road after emptying the lid bucket of water on the gray-blanketed figure, and he looked back now, at that stark form, and, with his pitying eyes still lingering there, he jumped.

An automobile coming from the rear, shot past. A warning cry from Porter, a shout and a woman's scream, rang in Jim Riley's ears as he passed over the great divide. His lips softened to the shadow of a smile, at the involuntary bidding of his last consciousness, when fear and shock had passed with the swift review of the panorama of a lifetime.

Porter, grappling with the frightened horses, gray and grim, choked an unfamiliar sound within his throat, and, shocked as he was, it was as nothing to the sorrow that gave no outward sign.

The man from the automobile, it was, who laid Riley's battered body beside the road and covered the sightless eyes that seemed now, to stare with a fixed horror at the black specks against the evening sky; specks that sailed and soared and drifted on the wind.

"Anythin' you can do? Sure. Stay by Riley till I can bring somebody. It ain't a joyful job I know; tough on the lady, but it's the best we can do. I've got one dead man aboard already. Fifty miles we've brought him so's that he could be buried decent, back in Tennessee. We've got him in a blanket, an' we've kept it wet all the way, but the sun's been fierce an' th' evaporation ain't done much good, so y' see I can't wait now. But I'll be right back, an' say, if you've got any pull, I want to dig a hole right here fer Riley. That was what he wanted—to die in the open—an' to lay—where he died. Me an' him, we've lived half a lifetime together, an' I'll give the rest of mine to see that he gets what he wants—wanted."

"Well, so long, I'll be pullin' my freight. Git up Roany! Git up Eoney! Poor old caballeros—y'a'll not get much hustle left in you, have you? But we're one lighter, now, than we was." Porter choked as the horses started down the steep grade.

"So he got his in the open, poor old Jim," Porter mused. His face was drawn and gray but a new determination stamped it now.

"Well, pard, I'll see that you lie in the open too, with half the world lyin' at your feet, an' the grand old mountain'll be your everlastin' monument, an' you'll be sleepin' right at home, an' Jim," he said, looking up into the marvelous blue that surrounded the plot of the sunset, "the birds is a-followin' of my freight an' there ain't no black specks, back there, a-lyin' between you an' heaven."

Indoor Sports
Dr. William D. Haggard, of Nashville, president of the American Medical Association, said at Atlantic City the other day:
"Why do so many Americans spend the summer abroad when our Atlantic coast has the best summer climate in the world?"

"A Nashville man spent last summer in England and France. It rained all day and every day over there."
"Have a good time? I asked him when he got back."
"Oh—er—wettish, you know, he said; 'but—tell you what doctor— and his face brightened up—I learned to crochet darn well!"

THE KITCHEN CABINET

(© 1925, Western Newspaper Union.)
Harvest and birds awing;
Orchard and vineyard with rich fruit-
age crowned,
And golden sheen on the sheaves well
bound—
Fulfillment in every thing,
—Edith Bradt.

ECONOMICAL SUGGESTIONS

All liquids in which vegetables are cooked should be saved; either serve combined with thickening for a sauce, with butter or cream, in gravies, or simply chill and use as a drink for those who need iron and the various mineral salts. A few

tablespoonfuls of the water in which young carrots are cooked will be far more effective than iron pills or tonic. Even the water in which potatoes have been cooked, though we have been taught in times past that it was poisonous, will be found good in bread, griddle cakes and gravy.

When cooking such succulent greens as spinach, no water is used, but any drained off should be used in the food for the family.

When cooking any of the green vegetables that grow above ground, do not add salt until they are nearly ready to serve, as it toughens the fiber and makes them less digestible.

When peas or corn lack sweetness a teaspoonful of sugar added to the kettle when cooking will greatly enhance the flavor. However, do not overdo the sweetening, as it will be noticeable and unnatural.

A small steak which could serve but three will answer well for five or six in the following dish:

Chop Suey.—Brown a small steak in suet, cut into small pieces, add a small onion or not as one's taste dictates, and simmer with a little water for a half hour on the back of the stove; then add two bunches (if ordinary size) of celery cut into small pieces, and continue to simmer until the celery is tender but not soft. Season well with salt and pepper and a few teaspoonfuls of chop suey sauce. Serve in the center of a hot platter with a border of cooked rice well seasoned and sprinkled with chop suey sauce. Left-over meats may be used for this dish, such as roast beef with a little fresh pork browned and 'cu' up. A small amount of meat thus favors a large dish and it is one that most families call for again and again.

Corn Souffle.—Melt one tablespoonful of butter, add two tablespoonfuls of flour and stir until well blended, then pour on one cupful of milk. Bring to the boiling point and add one can of corn, one and one-fourth teaspoonfuls of salt, a few grains of pepper, the yolks of two eggs beaten until thick and the whites of two eggs beaten stiff and dry. Turn into a buttered baking dish and bake in a moderate oven thirty minutes.

Suggestions for Dinner.
A fruit cocktail is a good beginning. Slice a ripe peeled pear into fine strips, add a peeled sliced peach or two, then a dozen or more melon balls; these are prepared with a potato-scoop. Put the mixture into sherbet cups and pour over a thick sugar sirup made of sugar, water, lemon juice and a bit of the rind grated. Chill and serve for the first course.

Breast of Veal Stuffed.—The market man will cut a pocket as deep as one likes in a breast of veal. Fill it with a stuffing, using breadcrumbs, butter, eggs, salt, pepper, onion finely chopped and such poultry dressing as one likes. Sew up and roast, basting often during the roasting. Serve with—

Spanish Potatoes.—Boil as many potatoes as the family needs, drain and shake over the heat to dry. Into a vegetable dish which has been well heated, put plenty of butter and a small onion very finely minced. Mix well and turn in the hot potatoes, cut with a knife, mixing until all are well-seasoned.

Mashed Brown Potatoes.—Try out fat salt pork cut into small cubes and remove the scraps; there should be one-third of a cupful of fat. Add two cupfuls of cold boiled potatoes, finely chopped, with pepper and salt if needed. Mix the potatoes thoroughly with the fat, cook three minutes, stirring constantly, then let stand to brown underneath. Fold as an omelet and turn out on a hot platter. Garnish with parsley.

Potato Muffins.—Mashed potato, left over, put into buttered gem pans and baked until brown is both attractive and good. Serve as a garnish to platter of fish or chops.

Browned Cheese Crackers.—Split milk crackers and spread with butter, sprinkle with grated cheese and cayenne. Put into a dripping pan and bake until delicately brown.

Mock Crab.—Melt one tablespoonful of butter, add two tablespoonfuls of flour and stir until well blended, then add one cupful of milk and cook until thick. Add one can of corn, one and one-fourth teaspoonful of salt, a teaspoonful of Worcestershire sauce and a half teaspoonful of mustard. Add two egg yolks and the beaten whites at the last. Bake slowly until set.

Nellie Maxwell

Egg and Poultry Societies Thrive

Coöperative Marketing Has Rapidly Developed in Past Few Years.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Co-operative marketing of eggs and poultry in the United States has undergone great development in the last 15 years. One hundred and eighty-three farmers' business organizations report handling eggs or poultry or both during 1924. They sold more than 70,000,000 dozens of eggs for approximately \$22,000,000. Although only 31 of the 183 organizations were of the truly co-operative type, these 31 handled 99 per cent of the egg business.

Formerly practically all poultry products were sold on a flat price basis. Eggs brought the same price regardless of quality. Poultry, which was usually sold alive, was paid for on the pound basis with little regard to its age or condition. This method, besides offering no inducement to producers to improve the quality of their poultry and eggs, brought about seasonal glutts and shortages.

Great improvement was made when poultry producers in various parts of the country adopted co-operative methods of marketing eggs and poultry. These efforts, at first local and primitive, eventually became quite widespread and complex. Large-scale poultry and egg co-operatives have been successfully conducted for a number of years in the Pacific Coast states. Egg and poultry marketing has been organized co-operatively in many states. Considerable attention has been given in the last two or three years to the co-operative method of marketing poultry in Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Utah, Texas, New Mexico, Idaho, Alabama, Kentucky and Virginia. In Minnesota local associations are federated for selling purposes. Elsewhere most of the recently formed associations are of the centralized, nonstock, nonprofit type.

A survey in 1924 showed 31 egg and poultry marketing associations in producing regions, and 4 at terminal markets. Twenty-two of them handled both eggs and poultry. Eight handled only eggs, and one handled only poultry. Missouri, with nine associations, was the state with the largest number; Minnesota was second, with six; California third, with four, and Texas fourth, with three. Five of 29 associations that gave the department information as to when they began operations, were organized before 1920, and the remainder since the beginning of that year.

Co-operative egg marketing was first developed by the present method on the Pacific coast. An association was formed in 1913 in Tulare county, California, with about 100 members. In its first year its sales exceeded \$25,000. Last year its sales were nearly \$400,000. Poultry producers of central California formed an organization in 1916, and this concern last year had 2,500,000 hens covered by its contracts. Its eggs are carefully graded and handled and are in good demand in Eastern markets. The Poultry Producers of Southern California, Inc., a co-operative organization formed in 1917, handled \$7,553 cases of eggs in its first year. Last year it handled 139,000 cases. In 1917 the Washington Co-operative Egg and Poultry association was formed with headquarters at Seattle. This association now handles about 300,000 cases of eggs a year, and its net worth has increased from about \$1,000 to \$700,000.

Records of Progress.
Similar records of progress in co-operation are cited by the United States Department of Agriculture from information furnished by co-operative egg and poultry associations in most of the other states mentioned. Poultry producers in New Jersey, faced with competition from Pacific coast poultrymen in Eastern markets, formed an association in 1921 with 438 members. After some unfortunate experiences this concern was reorganized in 1923, and last year it handled approximately 70,000 cases of eggs.

Poultry and eggs have been marketed co-operatively in the last ten years through co-operative creameries in Minnesota. This plan is considered ideal for assembling eggs, although it has its limitations in merchandising. So as to develop a better selling organization, Minnesota poultry and egg producers put a plan in operation in 1923 which provided for district organizations federated in a state association. This association, on December 31 last, was selling products from 14,000 members.

Self-Feeders for Calf Not Always Efficient

According to an experiment recently conducted by the dairy department of the South Dakota State college, Brookings, in regard to the efficiency of self-feeders for calves it was found that calves do not select their own rations to the best advantage—they eat too much of the protein feeds and keep themselves too fat. In another experiment as to the value of soy beans for dairy cattle, the results show that ground soy beans make a desirable feed because of their high protein content, but that soy bean hay is not as cheap a ration roughage in South Dakota as alfalfa hay, consequently soy bean hay is recommended as a feed only in localities where alfalfa and clover are not grown.

Oats Require Good Soil for Best Crop

To Avoid Winter-Killing Sow Plenty of Seed.

Oats are used mainly for hay or grain, seldom being turned under. They should be sown on good land. On poor soils they do not give satisfactory returns in either hay or grain, and make less growth than rye for turning under.

"Yet oats make a fine crop for farmers," says E. C. Blair, extension agronomist at the North Carolina State college. "Under favorable conditions they may be expected to yield 2,500 to 3,500 pounds of cured hay per acre. The hay contains 9.3 per cent protein, as compared to 5.9 per cent for timothy and 15.4 per cent for soy beans. A strong point in favor of oats is that hairy vetch sown with them will mature at the same time, making a hay richer in protein than oats alone."

"Oats often winter-kill severely. The best way to avoid this is to sow plenty of seed. Use at least two bushels per acre, sow them early enough to get a good start before cold weather. The best time is October. A good way to sow is to disk the seed in, or better still, drill them in, after corn or soy beans. It would be too late to sow them after cotton. October-sown oats far outyield late fall or spring-sown oats in both hay and grain."

Mr. Blair suggests that if oats begin to run up in the fall they should be grazed down or cold weather will damage them. They may be grazed for a while in the spring, but care should be taken not to graze them too long.

Fertilizer experiments made in North Carolina show that oats respond well to nitrogen. However, if the land is fertile, or has received a good application of fertilizer in the spring, oats need not be fertilized in the fall. They may be given 100 pounds of nitrate of soda per acre early in the spring if they appear to need it.

Oat hay should be cut when the grains are in the dough stage, then it is easy to cure and excellent in quality.

Limberneck Is Result of Ptomaine Poisoning

Limberneck or blind staggers, as it is sometimes known in some localities, may be the result of ptomaine poisoning caused by eating some rancid food which, in the case of poultry, generally means decayed meat. It may, however, mean moldy grains. Sometimes it comes about merely by acute indigestion caused by clogging the system in some way, possibly by feeding too much fiber such as is found in the hulls of oats, barley, etc., or allowing them to eat dried, tough grass.

The thing to do is to starve the birds for a day or so to get the crops empty and then give each one a teaspoonful or two of olive oil and empty the crop. Give the fowl in the meantime access to nothing but sand or grit and water. Then feed some easily digestible, highly nutritious feed, such as bits of raw meat that have been slightly broiled; or, if the fowl can handle it, stale, dried bread soaked in sweet milk.

High Living Is Bad

There is always some mortality among hens no matter how well they are cared for. It is probable that most of the deaths among hens are due to long confinement in good houses with rich rations, night feeding and lack of exercise. This condition tends to bring on liver trouble and other disorders. It is one of the penalties the poultryman must pay for getting a larger number of eggs. His problem is not to save a few weak sisters but to breed a race of hens that can stand the gaff.

FARM NOTES

Fresh manure may be spread on the ground in the fall.

Think of weeds as leaks swiftly depleting the water supply. But don't just think.

Last call for the cull hens. After September 15 it is difficult to pick the poor ones.

The best way of pasturing soy beans with hogs is to grow the beans with corn and then hog the combination down.

It costs just as much to raise a 40-bushel crop as one that yields 50 bushels, so why not plant your farm to adapted varieties?

Dockage consists of dirt, straw, and weed seeds, and chaff. Why pay freight rates on 4,338,000 pounds of dockage every fall?

Smutty wheat results in enormous losses in yields of wheat and in the value of the contaminated grain. The odor and color of the smutty grain render it inferior for milling.

Musty wheat is very objectionable because of the bad odor it gives the flour. Nearly 4 per cent of the wheat received at Kansas City is marked down on account of being spouted.

It is a good policy to cut the slugs off fine. It packs in the silo better and also feeds better. It may take a little longer to put the stalks through the cutter when cut fine, but it pays well to do so.

Daddy's Evening Fairy Tale

MARY GRAHAM BONNER

GNU AND GOAT

"There are a few of us left," said the White-Tailed Gnu. He looked like a very ugly sort of a horse and his face showed that he was cross and did not care for anyone.

"I don't suppose many will mind," answered the White-Bearded Gnu. They were named these names as you can easily guess because one's tail was white toward the end and the other had a funny-looking beard which was white.

"I don't suppose many would mind if there weren't any of you or your kind around, my dear," said the White-Tailed Gnu. "Yes, I can return the compliment."

"Well, none of us are so very pleasant," said the White-Bearded Gnu. "That is true enough. But why should we be? I wouldn't care to make the effort to be friendly and nice."

"Neither would I," said the White-Tailed Gnu.

"They say it comes quite naturally to some creatures," said the White-Bearded Gnu.

"What! To be friendly and nice? I can't understand it," said the White-Tailed Gnu.

"They say that the snakes are cross when they are young and that they become far more pleasant as the days or the months or the years go by. They're cranky when they're quite little and squirming and wriggling. But when they're bigger they are often extremely pleasant. Some cross creatures, some bite creatures and poison them, but the ones who don't do either of these things (and there are many who don't) grow more friendly as they grow older," said the White-Bearded Gnu.

"So, I've heard," said the White-Tailed Gnu. "I heard the keeper telling that to some one the other day and he also said:

"But the Gnu family grow crosser every single day." Ah, that shows how sensible we are. For as we grow older we know enough to become crosser all the time. And our reason for this is,

"Why be pleasant when we can be cross?"

They did not talk after this, but in a yard not far away was a goat.

His name was Tan. "I am an imported goat," he said. He had been given his name because he was tan in color, almost a reddish tan.

"I don't know what you mean by that," said Billy Goat, in the adjoining yard, "unless you mean you're a mighty cross goat."

"I don't mean anything of the sort," said Tan.

"But you are cross," said Billy.

"Ah, yes, that I am," agreed Tan, shaking his head, as though it pleased him. "I won't let anyone come in my yard. None of the other goats are good enough for me. I have to be kept by myself."

"What you say is perfectly true," said Billy, "but do these things mean the same as imported?"

"No, no, no," said Tan, shaking his head again so that his long beard waved from side to side. "I will go on talking to you as soon as I have had a little meal of grain and hay."

Tan had something to eat in his yard and Billy ate some hay in his own yard. Billy was with a number of other goats, as he was friendly and pleasant and good natured.

"When I say that I am an imported goat," commenced Tan, after a few moments, "I mean that I have been brought here from a foreign land—that is a land from far away."

"You see that makes me unusual and interesting. And it makes me feel as if I couldn't be too friendly with common creatures around me. They wouldn't appreciate me! Why once a man came in my yard to clean it out and to see if I were all right, and I went for him with my horns! Well—I almost, almost killed him!"

"Yes, I have heard of that," said Billy. "But you needn't be so conceited. In the first place of all there are many creatures in this zoo who have come from lands far away. They have had more interesting experiences than you have had. The zoo is filled with interesting animals. That is the most important thing about a zoo—to get as many animals from all over the world as possible."

"So you needn't be so proud, and besides we don't like a cross goat such as you are, any more than you care for us!"

Billy