## DUNRAVEN RANCH.

A Story of American Frontier Life.

By CAPT. CHARLES KING, U. S. A., AUTHOR OF "THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," "FROM THE RANKS," "THE DESERTER." ETC.

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T WAS nearly midnight, and still the gay party lingered on the veranda. There had been a fortnight of "getting settled" at the new post, preceded by a month of marching that had brought the battalion from

distant service to this strange Texan sta

tion. The new comers had been hospitably welcomed by the officers of the little

garrison of infantry, and now, in recog-

nition of their many courtesies, the field officer commanding the arriving troops had been entertaining the resident offi-cers and ladies at dinner. The colonel

was a host in himself, but preferred not

to draw too heavily on his reserves of

anecdote and small talk, so he had called

in two of his subalterns to assist in the

pleasant duty of being attentive to the infantry ladies, and just now, at 11:45 pm., he was wondering if Lieut. Perry

had not too literally construed his in-

structions, for that young gentleman was devoting himself to Mrs. Belknap in

a manner so marked as to make the cap-

tain, her lawful lord and master, mani

festly uneasy.

Mrs. Belknap, however, seemed to enjoy the situation immensely. She was

a pretty woman at most times, as even

ful woman at all times, was the verdict

of the officers of the regiment when they happened to speak of the matter among

themselves. She was dark, with lus-

trous eyes and sweeping lashes, with

coral lips and much luxuriance of tress,

and a way of glancing sideways from

under her heavily fringed evelids that

the younger and more impressionable

men found quite irresistible when ac-

corded the rare luxury of a tete-a-tete.

Belknap was a big and boisterous man; Mrs. Belknap was small in stature, and

soft-very soft-of voice. Belknap was

either brusquely repellent or oppressively cordial in manner; Mrs. Belknap was

either gently and exasperatingly indif-ferent to those whom she did not care to

attract, or caressingly sweet to those whose attentions she desired.

In their own regiment the young offi-

cers soon found that unless they wished

to be involved in an uppleasantness with

Belknap it was best to be only very mod-

erately devoted to his pretty wife, and

those to whom an unpleasantness with the big captain might have had no ter-

rors of consequence were deterred by the fact that Mrs. Belknap's devotee

among the "youngsters" had invariably

become an object of coldness and aver

sion to the other dames and damsels of

the garrison. Very short lived, there

fore, had been the little flirtations that

sprang up from time to time in those

frontier posts wherein Capt. and Mrs.

Belknap were among the chief orna

ments of society; but now matters

seemed to be taking other shape. From the very day that handsome Ned Perry

dismounted in front of Belknap's quar

ters and with his soldiery salute reported

to the then commanding officer that Col.

Brainard and his battalion of cavalry

would arrive in the course of two or

three hours, Mrs. Belknap had evinced a

contentment in his society and assumed

an air of quasi-proprietorship that served

to annoy her garrison sisters more than

a little. For the time being all the cav

alrymen were bachelors, either by ac-

tual rank or "by brevet," as none of the

ladies of the -th accompanied the bat-

talion on its march, and none were ex-pected until the stations of the regiment

in its new department had been definite-

ly settled. The post surgeon, too, was

living a life of single blessedness as the

early spring wore on, for his good wife

had betaken herself, with the children,

to the distant east as soon as the disap

pearance of the winter's snows rendered

staging over the hard prairie roads a

It was the doctor himself who, seated

matter of no great danger or discomfort

in an easy chair at the end of the ve-

randa, first called the colonel's attention

to Perry's devotional attitude at Mrs.

Belknap's side. She was reclining in a

hammock, one little, slippered foot occa-

sionally touching the floor and impart-

ing a gentle, swinging motion to the

affair, and making a soothing swish-

swish of skirts along the matting under-

neath. Her jeweled hands looked very

slender and fragile and white as they

gleamed in the soft light that shone

from the open windows of the parlor.

They were busied in straightening out

the kinks in the gold cord of his forage

cap and in rearranging a little silker

braid and tassel that was fastened in a

clumsy, man like fashion to one of the

buttons at the side; he, seated in a camp

chair, was bending forward so that his

handsome, shapely head was only a

trifle higher than hers, and the two-

hers so dark and rich in coloring, his

so fair and massive and strong-came

rather too close together for the equa-

nimity of Capt. Belknap, who had es

sayed to take a hand at whist in the par-

One or two of the ladies, also, were

silent observers of the scene-silent as to

the scene because, being in conversation at the time with brother officers of Lieut.

Porry, they were uncertain as yet how

comments on his growing flirtation might

be received. That their eyes should oc

easionally wander towards the hammock

and then glance with sympathetic sig-

nificance at those of some fair ally and

intimate was natural enough. But when

it became presently apparent that Mrs.

Belknap was actually unfastening the

little silken braid that had hung on Ned

Perry's cap ever since the day of his ar-

rival-all the while, too, looking shyly

up in his eyes as her fingers worked

when it was seen that she presently de-

tached it from the button and then, half

hesitatingly, but evidently in compliance

with his wishes, handed it to him; when

he was seen to toss it carelessly-even

contemptuously-away and then bend

down lower, as though gazing into her

shaded eyes, Mrs. Lawrence could stand

friend, Mr. Perry, something of a flirt?"
"Who?-Ned?" asked Mr. Graham, in

"Mr. Graham," said she, "isn't your

it no longer.

CHAPTER I. glance towards the object of his inquiry.
"How on earth should I know anything

"How on earth should I know anything about it? Of course you do not seek expert testimony in asking me. He tries, I suppose, to adapt himself to circumstances. But why do you ask?"

"Because I see that he has been inducing Mrs. Belknap to take off that little tassel on the button of his cap. He has worn it when off duty ever since he came; and we supposed it was something he cherished; I know she did."

Graham broke forth in a peal of merry laughter, but gave no further reply, for just then the colonel and the doctor left their chairs, and, sauntering over to the hammock, brought mighty relief to Bel-knap at the whist table and vexation of spirit to his pretty wife. The flirtation was broken at a most interesting point,

was broken at a most interesting point, and Perry, rising suddenly, came over and joined Mrs. Lawrence.

If she expected to see him piqued or annoyed at the interruption and some-what perturbed in manner, she was greatly mistaken. Nothing could have been more sunshiny and jovial than the greeting he gave her. A laughing apol-ogy to Graham for spoiling his tete-tete was accomplished in a moment, and then down by her side he sat and plunged into a merry description of his experi-ences at dinner, where he had been placed next to the chaplain's wife on the one hand, and she had been properly ag-grieved at his attentions to Mrs. Belknap

"You must remember that Mrs. Wells is a very strict Presbyterian, Mr. Perry; and, for that matter, none of us have seen a dinner such as the colonel gave us this evening for ever and ever so long. We are quite unused to the ways of civilization; whereas you have just come from the east-and long leave. Perhaps it is the fashion to be all devotion to one's next door neighbor at dinner."

"Not if she be as repellent and venerable as Mrs. Wells, I assure you. Why, I thought she would have been glad to leave the table when, after having re-fused sherry and Pontet-Canet for up-wards of an hour, her glass was filled with champagne when she happened to be looking the other way."
"It is the first dinner of the kind she

has ever seen here, Mr. Perry, and I don't suppose either Mr. or Mrs. Wells has been up so late before in years. He would have enjoyed staying and watching whist, but she carried him off almost as soon as we left the table. Our society has been very dull, you know-only ourselves at the post all this last year, and nobody outside of it."

"One would suppose that with all this magnificent cattle range there would be some congenial people ranching near you. Are there none at all?"

"Absolutely none! There are some ranches down in the Washita country but only one fine one near us; and that might as well be on the other side of the Atlantic. No one from there ever comes here; and Dr. Quin is the only living soul in the garrison who ever got within the walls of that ranch. What he saw there he positively refuses to tell.

despite all our entreaty."
"You don't tell me there's a ranch claimed Mr. Perry, with sudden interest. "Why, I do, indeed! Is it possible you have been here two whole weeks and haven't heard of Dunraven Ranch?"

"I've heard there was such a thing; I saw it from a distance when out hunting the other day. But what's the mystery -what's the matter with it?"

"That's what we all want to knowand cannot find out. Now, there is an exploit worthy your energy and best efforts, Mr. Perry. There is a big, wealthy, well stocked ranch, the finest homestead buildings, we are told, in all this part of Texas. They say it is beau-tifully furnished—that it has a fine library, a grand piano, all manner of things indicative of culture and refine ment among its occupants-but the owner only comes around once or twice a year, and is an iceberg of an English-man. All the people about the ranch are English, too, and the most repellent, boorish, discourteous lot of men you ever caw. When the Eleventh were here they did everything they could to be civil to them, but not an invitation would they accept, not one would they extend; and so from that day to this none of the officers have had any intercourse with the people at the ranch, and the soldiers know very little more. Once or twice a year some very ordinary looking men arrive who are said to be very distinguished people-in England; but they remain only a little while, and go away as suddenly as they came."

"And you have never seen any of "Never, except at a distance. Nor

has any one of the officers, except Dr. "And you have never heard anything about the inmates and why they keep up this policy of exclusiveness?"

"We have heard all manner of things some of them wildly romantic, some mysteriously tragic, and all of them. probably, absurd. At all events, Capt. Lawrence has told me he did not wish me to repeat what I had heard, or to be concerned in any way with the stories afloat; so you must ask somebody else. Try the doctor. To change the subject, Mr. Perry, I see you have lost that mysterious little silken braid and tassel you wore on your cap button. I fancied

there was some romance attached to it, and now it is gone."

Perry laughed, his blue eyes twinkling with fun: "If I will tell you how and where I got that tassel, will you tell me what you have heard about Dunraven

"I cannot, unless Capt. Lawrence withdraws his prohibition. Perhaps he will, though, for I think it was only because he was tired of hearing all our conjectures and theories."

Well, will you tell me if I can induce the captain to say he has no objection? persisted Perry.

"I will to-morrow-if you will tell me about the tassel to-night." "Is it a positive promise? You will tell me to-morrow all you have heard about Dunraven Ranch if I will tell you to-

"Yes-a promise." "Very well, then. You are a witness to the compact, Graham. Now for my confession. I have worn that tassel ever since our parting ball at Fort Riley. That is to say, it has been fastened to that button ever since the ball until tonight; but I've been mighty careful not to wear that cap on any kind of duty." "And yet you let Mrs. Belknap take it

"Why shouldn't I? The was no

"Mr. Perry!" gasped Mrs. Lawrence.
"And do you mean that Mrs. Belknap
knows—that you told her what you have
just told me?"

just told me?"

"Well, no," laughed Perry. "I fancy
Mrs. Belknap thinks as you thought—
that it was a gage d'amour. Hallo! look
at that light away out there across the
prairie. What can that be?"

Mrs. Lawrence rose suddeuly to her
feet and gazed southeastward in the di-

rection in which the young officer pointed. It was a lovely, starlit night. A soft wind was blowing gently from the south and bearing with it the fragrance of spring blossoms and far away flower-Others, too, had arisen, attracted by Perry's sudden exclamation. Mrs. Belknap turned languidly in her bam-mock and glanced over her pretty white shoulder. The colonel followed her eyes with his and gave a start of surpr The doctor turned slowly and composed-ly and looked silently towards the glistening object, and then upon the officers of the cavalry there fell sudden astonish-

"What on earth could that have been?" asked the colonel. "It gleamed like the head light of a locomotive, away down suddenly went out."

"Be silent a moment and watch," whispered Mrs. Lawrence to Perry. "You will see it again; and—watch the

Surely enough, even as they were all looking about and commenting on the strange apparition, it suddenly glared forth a second time, shining full and lus-trous as an unclouded planet, yet miles away beyond and above the fringe of cottonwoods that wound southeastward with the little stream. Full half a minute it shone, and then, abruptly as before, was hidden from eight.

Perry was about starting forward to oin the colonel when a little hand was laid upon his arm.

"Wait; once more you'll see it," she whispered. "Then take me in to Capt. Lawrence. Do you see that the doctor

Without saying a word to any one, the post surgeon had very quietly withdrawn from the group on the veranda. He could not well leave by the front gate without attracting attention; but he strolled leisurely into the hall, took up a book that lay on the table, and passed through the group of officers seated smoking and chatting there, entered the sitting room on the south side of the hall—the side opposite the parlor where the whist game was in progress-and there he was lost to sight.

A third time the bright light burs upon the view of the gazers. A third time, sharply and suddenly, it disappeared. Then for a moment all was llence and watchfu'ness; but it came no

Perry looked questioningly in his companion's face. She had turned a little white, and he felt sure that she was "Are you cold?" he asked her, gently.

"No-not that; but I hate mysteries, after what I've heard, and we haven't seen that light in ever so long. Come here to the corner one moment." And she led him around to the other flank of the big wooden, barrack like residence of the commanding officer.

"Look up there," she said, pointing to a dark window under the peaked dormer roof of the large cottage to the south. 'That is the doctor's house.'

In a few seconds a faint gleam seemed to creep through the slats. Then the slats themselves were thrown wide open, a white shade was lowered, and, with the rays behind it growing brighter every instant, a broad white light shone forth over the roof of the veranda. Another moment and footsteps were heard along the doctor's porch, footsteps that presently approached them along the

"Come," she said, plucking at his sleeve, "come away; it is the doctor." "For what reason?" he answered. "That would seem like hiding. No, Mrs

Lawrence, let us stay until he comes.' But the doctor passed them with brief and courteous salutation; spoke of the beauty of the night and the balm of the summery air, and went in again by the main door to the colonel's quarters.

Then Perry turned to his partner: "Well, Mrs. Lawrence, what does it all mean? Is this part of what you had to

"Don't ask me now. I-I did not want to see what we have seen, but I had heard queer stories and could not believe them. Take me in to Capt. Lawrence, please. And, Mr. Perry, you won't spea of this to any one, will you? Indeed, if I had known, I would not have come out here for the world; but I didn't believe it, even when she went away and took the children."

"Who went away?" "Mrs. Quin-the doctor's wife. And she was such a sweet woman, and so devoted to him."

"Well, pardon me, Mrs. Lawrence, I don't see through this thing at all. Do you mean that the doctor has anything

to do with the mystery?" She bowed her head as they turned back to the house: "I must not tell you any more to-night. You will be sure to hear something of it all, here. Everybody on the piazza saw the lights, and all who were here before you came knew what they meant."

"What were they?" "Signals, of some kind, from Dunraven

CHAPTER II. ED PERRY hated reveille and morning stables about as ve-

hemently as was possible to a young fellow who was in other

respects thoroughly in love with his profession. A fairer type of the American cavairy officer, when once he got in saddle and settled down to business, one would hardly ask to find. Tall, athletic, slender of build, with frank, laughing blue eyes, curly, close cropped, light brown hair, and a twirling mustache that was a source of inexpressible delight to its owner and of some envy to his brother subalterns, Mr. Perry was probably the best looking of the young offi-cers who marched with the battalion to this far away station on the borders of the Llano Estacado. He had been ten years in service, counting the four he spent as a cadet, had just won his silver bar as the junior first lieutenant of the regiment, was full to the brim of health, energy, animal spirits and fun, and, barring a few duns and debts in his earlier experiences, had never known a heavier care in the world than the transient

and epoemeral anxioty as so whether he would be called up for registion on a subject he had not so much as looked at, or "hived" absent from a roll call he had lastly alept through.

Any other man, his comrades said, would have been spoiled a dozen times over by the petting he had received from both men and women; but there was something essentially sweet and ganial about his nature—something "lacking in guile about his perceptions," said a cynical old captain of the regiment—and a jovial, sunshiny way of looking upon the world as an Eden, all men and all women as friends, and the army as the profession above all others, and these various attributes combined to make him popular with his kind and unusually attractive to the opposite sex. As a cadet he had with his kind and unusually attractive to the opposite sex. As a cadet he had been perpetually on the verge of dismissal because of the appalling array of demerits he could roll up against his name, and yet the very officers who jotted down the memorands of his sins—omission and commission—against the regulations were men who openly said he "had the making of one of the firset soldiers in the class." As junior second lieutenant—"plehs"—of the regiment, he had been -"plebe"—of the regiment, he had welcomed by every man from the o down, and it was considered particularl rough that he should have to go to suc a company as Capt. Canker's, because Canker was a man who never got along with any of his junious; but there was with any of his juniors; but there was something so irrepressibly frank and contrite in Perry's boyish face when he would appear at his captain's door in the early morning and burst out with: "By Jove, captain! I slept through reveille again this morning, and never got down till stables were nearly over," that even that cross grained but honest troop commander was disarmed, and, though he threatened and reprimanded, he would never punish—would never deny his subaltern the faintest privilege; and when promotion took the captain to another regiment he bade good-by to Perry with eyes that were suspiciously wet. "Why, that were suspiciously wet. "Why, blow it all, what do you fellows hate Canker so for?" the youngster often said. "He ought to put me in arrest time and again, but he won't. Blame if I don't put myself in arrest, or confin myself to the limits of the post, and do something, to cut all this going to town and hops and such things. Then I can stick to the troop like wax and get up at reveille; but if I'm out dancing till 2 or 8 in the morning it's no use, I tell you; I

just can't wake up."

It was always predicted of Ned Perry that he would be "married and done for" within a year of his graduation Every new face in the five years that followed revived the garrison proph-ecy, "Now he's gone, sure!" but, however devoted he might seem to the damse in question, however restless and impatient he might be when compelled by his duties to absent himself from her side, however promising to casual observers-perchance to the damsel herself-migh e all the surface indications, the abso lute frankness with which he proclaimed his admiration to every listener, and the fact that he "had been just so with half a dozen other girls," enabled the cooler

"I do wish," said Mrs. Turner, "that Mr. Perry would settle on somebody, because, just so long as he doesn't, it is rather hard to tell who he belongs to. And, as Mrs. Turner had long b reigning belle among the married wome of the -th, and one to whom the young officers were always expected to show much attention, her whimsical way of describing the situation was readily understood.

heads of the regiment to decide that the

time had not yet come-or at least the

But here at the New station-at far away Rossiter-matters were taking on a new look. To begin with, the wives of the officers of the cavalry battalion had not joined, none of the ladies o -th were here, and none would be apt to come until the summer's scouting work was over and done with. The ladies of the little battalion of infantry were here, and, though there were no maiden sisters or cousins yet at the post (rest assured that more than one was already summoned), they were sufficient in number to enliven the monotony of garrison life and sufficiently attractive to warrant all the attention they cared to receive. It was beginning to be gar-rison chat that if Ned Perry had not "settled on somebody" as the ultimate object of his entire devotion, somebody had settled on him, and that was pretty

Mrs. Belknap.
And though Ned Perry hated reveille and morning stables, as has been said, and could rarely "take his week" without making one or more lapses, here he was this beautiful May morning out at daybreak when it was his junior's tour of duty, and wending his way with that youngster out to the line of cavalry stables, booted and spurred and equipped

for a ride. The colonel had listened with some surprise to his request, proffered just as the party was breaking up the night before, to be absent from garrison a few

hours the following morning.
"But we have battalion drill at 9 o'clock, Mr. Perry, and I need you there,"

"Oh, I'll be back in time for that, sir. I wanted to be off three hours or so before breakfast." The colonel could not help laughing.

"Of course you can go—go wherever you like at those hours, when you are not on guard; but I never imagined you would want to get up so early."
"Neither I would, colonel, but I've

been interested in something I heard about this ranch down the Monee, and thought I'd like to ride down and look "Go ahead, by all means, and see

whether those lights came from there. It made me think of a play I once sawthe 'Colleen Bawn'-where a fellow's sweetheart signaled across the lake by showing a light in her cottage window just that way three times, and be answered by turning out the lights in his room. Of course the distance wasn't anything like this; and there was no one here to turn down any light- Eh! what did you say?"

"I beg pardon, colonel. I didn't mean to interrupt," put in a gentle voice at his elbow, while a little hand on Perry's arm gave it a sudden and vigorous squeeze, but Capt. Lawrence has called me twice -he will not re-enter after lighting his cigar-and I must say good night."

"Oh, good night, Mrs. Lawrence. I'm sorry you go so early. We are going to reform you all in that respect as soon as we get farly settled. Here's Perry, now, would sit up and play whist with me an hour yet."

"Not this night, colonel. He has promised to walk home with us" (another squeeze), "and go he must, or be a faith less escort. Good night. We've had such a lovely, lovely time."

And Ned Perry, dazed, went with her to the gate, where Capt. Lawrence was awaiting them. She had barely time to murmur: "You were just on the point of telling

him about the doctor's lights. I cannot forgive myself for being the means of seeing it; but keep my confidence, and keep-this until everybody is talking about it: it will come soon changh." Naturally, Mr. Perry want who some-

what perturbed in spirit a

7th conjecture as to what these things ould mean. The first notes of "assemand by the time the men marched out to the stables he had had his plunge bath, a vigorous rub and a chance to think over his plans before following in their tracks, dressed for his ride. The astonishment of Lieut Parks, the of Lieut. Parke, the junior of the troop, was something almost too deep for words when Perry came bounding to his side. "What on earth brings you out, Ned?"

"Going for a gallop—down the Monee; that's all. I haven't had a fresheuer for

"Gad! we get exercise enough at morning dr. !!!, one would think, and our horses too. Oh!"— And Mr. Parke stopped suddenly. It flashed across him that perhaps Perry was going riding that perhaps Perry was going riding with a lady friend and the hour was her selection. If so, 'twas no business of

ale, and remarks were uncalled for. When he mounted and rode away from the stable Mr. Parke was outside at the picket rope, and busily occupied in his duties, supervising the fastening of the fresh, spirited horses at the line, for the troop commander was a man intolerant of disorder of any kind, and nothing more offended his eye than the sight of two or three of his charges loose and plunging and kicking up and down the stable yard. On the other hand, there was no one exploit that seemed to give the younger animals keener delight— nothing that made the perpetrator a bigger hero in his own eyes or the object of greater envy among his fellows—and as greater envy among his fellows—and as a consequence every device of which equine ingenuity was master was called into play, regularly as the morning came around, to break loose either from the controlling hand of the trooper or from the taut and straining picket rope. The first care of the officer in charge of the troop sergeants was, therefore, to see that all the horses were securely lashed and knotted. Not until he had examined every "halter shank" was Mr. Parke at leisure to look around, but when he did his comrade had disappeared from view.

And over this broad level, horizon

bounded, not a moving object could be seen. Far away, in little groups of three or four, black dots of grazing cattle marked the plain, and over in the "breaks" of the Monee, just beyond the fringing cottonwoods, two or three herds of Indian ponies were sleeply cropping their morning meal, watched by the little black imp of a boy whose dirty red blanket made the only patch of color against the southern landscape. Later in the day, when the sun mounted high in the heavens and the brisk westerly winds sent the clouds sailing swift across the skies, all the broad prairie seemed in motion, for then huge shadows swept its face with measured speed, and distant cattle and neighboring pony herd appeared as though calmly and contentedly riding on a broad platform, Nature's own "observation car." taking a leisurely journey towards the far away

Pacific.

But the sun was only just up as Mr.

Parke came back from his inspection of the halter fastenings and paused to look scross the low valley. Far down to the southeast the rays seemed glinting on some bright objects clustered together within short range of the shadowy fringe, and the lieutenant shaded his eyes with his gauntlet and looked fixed-

"Some new tinning down at that English ranch they talk of, I suppose," was his explanation of the phenomenon, and then "wonder why Perry hasn't ridder to cultivate the acquaintance of those people before this. He was always the first man in the—th to find out who our neighbors were."

Pondering over this question, it occurred to Mr. Parke that Perry had said ing; but nowhere was there a speck in sight that looked like loping horseman. To be sure, the trail bore close to the low bluffs that bounded the valley on the north by the time one had ridden a mile or so out from the post. He was probably hidden by this shoulder of the prairie, and would continue to be until he reached the bend, five miles below. No use watching for him then. Besides, he might not yet have started. Mr. Parke recalled the fact that he half suspected a while ago that Ned was going to ridean early ante-breakfast rido-with a lady friend. Mrs. Belknap had her own horse, and was an accomplished equestrienne; Mrs. Lawrence rode fairly well, and was always glad to go, when some-body could give her a saddle and a reli-able mount. There were others, too, among the ladies of the infantry garrison were no novices a cheval. Mr. Parke had no intention whatever of prying into the matter. It was simply as something the officer in charge of stable duty was entitled to know that he turned

suddenly and called: "Sergt. Gwynne!" He heard the name passed down the dark interior of the stable by the men sweeping out the stalls, and the prompt and cheery reply. The next instant a tall young trooper stepped forth into the blaze of early sunlight, his right hand raised in salute, and stood erect and mo-

tionless by the lieutenant's side. "Did Mr. Perry take an extra horse, sergeant?"

"I thought possibly he meant to take Roland. He's the best lady's horse in the troop, is he not?" "Yes, sir; but Roland is at the line

"Very well, then. That's all. I presume he has just ridden down to Dun-raven." And Mr. Parke turned to look once more at the glinting objects down the distant valley. It was a moment or two before he was aware of the fact that the sergeant still stood there, instead of

returning to his duties.
"I said that was all, sergeant; you can
go back to your feeding." And then
Mr. Parke turned in some surprise, for Sergt. Gwynne, by long odds the "smartest" and most soldierly of the non-commissioned officers of the cavalry battal lion, for the first time in his history seemed to have forgotten himself Though his attitude had not changed, face had, and a strange look was in his bright blue eyes-a look of incre dulity and wonderment and trouble all combined. The lieutenant was fairly startled when, as though gathering himself together, the sergeant faiteringly

"I beg pardon, sir-he had riddenwhere?" "Down to the Ranch, sergeant-that one you can just see, away down the

"I know, sir; but-the name?" "Dunraven Ranch." For an instant the sergeant stood as though dazed, then, with sudden effort, saluted, faced about, and plunged into

CHAPTER III.

the dark recesses of the stable.

MEANTIME Lieut. Perry was riding blithely down the winding trail, totally unconscious that his movements were of the faintest consequence to anybody but himself, and equally heedless of their being a source of speculation. His horse was one he rejoiced in, full of spirit and spring and intelligence;

tne morning was beautiful, just cool enough to be exhilarating; his favorite hound, Bruce, went bounding over the turf under the slopes, or ranging off through the cottonwoods along the stream, or the shallow, sandy arroyos, where the grass and weeds grew rank and luxuriant. Every now and then with sudden rush and whir a drove of prairie chickens would leap from their covert, and, after vigorous flapping of wings for a few rods, would go skimming restfully in long easy curve, and settle to earth again a hundred yards away, as though suddenly reminded of the fact that this was mating time and no gentleman would be mean enough to shoot at such a season.

Every little while, too, with prodigious kicking of dust and show of heels, with eyes fairly bulging out of his feather brained head, and tall lop ears laid flat on his back, a big jack rabbit would bound off into space, and go tearing across the prairie in mad race for his threatened life, putting a mil- between him and the Mones before he began to realize that the two quadrupeds ambling realize that the two quadrupeds ambling along the distant trall were obedient to the will of that single rider, who had no the will of that single rider, who had no thought to spare for game so small. Bome Indian ponies, grazing across his pathway, set back their stunted ears, and, cow like, refused to budge at sight and hearing of the big American horse; whereat a little vagabond of a Cheyenne, not ten years old nor four feet high, set up a shrill chatter and screech and let drive a few well directed clods of turf, and then showed his white teeth in a grin as Perry sung out a cheery "How! sonny," and spurred on through the opening thoroughfare, heedless of spite-ful pony looks or threatening heels.

Perry's spirits rose with every rod. Youth, health, contentment, all were his, and his heart was warm towards his fellow men. To the best of his reckoning, he had not an enemy or detractor in the world. He was all gladness of nathe world. He was all gladness of na-ture, all friendliness, frankness and cor-diality. The toughest cowboy whom they met on the long march down, the most crabbed of the frontiersmen they had ever encountered, was never proof against such sunshine as seemed to irradiate his face. He would go out of his way at any time to meet and hail a fellow man upon the prairies, and rarely came back without knowing all about him—where he was from, where he was -where he was from, where he was bound and what were his hopes and prospects. And as for himself, no man dier to answer questions or to meet in friendliest and most jovial spirit the rough but well meant greetings of "the plaint"

Being by this frame of mind to an extent even greater than his normal wont, Mr. Perry's eyes glistened, and he struck spur to hasten Nolan's stride, when, far ahead, and coming towards him on the trail, he saw a horseman like himself. Being in this mood of sociability, he was something more than surprised to see that all of a sudden that horseman had reined in-a mere black dot a mile away —and was presumably examining him as he advanced. Hostile Indians there had been none for many a long month, "road agents" would have starved in a region where there practically were no roads, cowboys might, and did, get on frolics and have wild "tears" at times, but who ever heard of their being hostile, man to man? Yet Perry was plainsman enough to tell, even at the mile of distance, that the stranger had halted solely to scruti-nize him, and, next, to his vast astonishment, that something in his appearance had proved either alarming or suspicious, for the horseman had turned abruptly, plunged through the timber and across the stream, and in another moment veering that way himself to see, Perry marked him fairly racing into the mout of a shallow ravine, or "break," that entered the valley from the south, and

there he was lost to sight. "What an ill mannered galoot!" was his muttered comment as he gave Nolan brief chance to crop the juicy grass, while his perturbed rider sat gazing across the stream in the direction taker by the shy horseman. "I've half a mind to drop the ranch and put out after that fellow. That ravine can't go in so very far but what he must soon show up on the level prairie; and I'll bet Nolan could run him down." After a moment's reflection, however, Mr. Perry concluded that as he had come so far and was now nearly within rifle shot of the mysterious goal of his morning ride, he might as well let the stranger go, and pushed

ahead himself for Dunraven. The stream bent southward just at the point where he had first caught sight of the horseman, and around that point he knew the ranch to be. Very probably that was one of the ranchmen of whom Mrs. Lawrence had spoken—churlish fel-lows, with a civil word for nobody, grim and repellent. Why, certainly. That accounted for his evident desire to avoid the cavalryman; but he need not have been in such desperate haste-need not have kept at such unapproachable bounds, as though he shunned even being seen. That was the queer thing, thought Perry. He acted just as though he did not want to be recognized. Perhaps he'd been up to some devilment at the ranch

This thought gave spur to his speed and Nolan, responsive to his me mood, leaped forward along the winding trail once more. The point was soon reached and turned, and the first object that caught Perry's eye was a long row of stakes stretching from the cottonwoods straight to the south up the gentle slope to the prairie, and indicating beyond all question the presence there of a stout and high and impassable wire fence. There are few things the cavalryman holds in meaner estimate.

"That marks the western limit," thought Perry to himself, "and doubtless reaches miles away to the south, from what I hear. Now, where does one

A little farther on he came upon trail leading from the low bluffs to his left hand. It crossed the winding bridle path on which he rode, though some of the hoof tracks seemed to join, and wheel tracks too. He had marked that between the fort and the point no sign of wheel appeared; it was a hoof trail and noth ing more. Now a light and little traveled wagon track came in from the north, and while one branch seemed to cross the Monee and to ascend the opposite slopes close along the wire fence, the other joined him and went on down the stream. This he decided to follow. A ride of a few hundred yards brought

him to a point where a shoulder of bluff twisted the trail well in towards the stream, and he, thinking to cross and reconnoiter on the other share, turned No lan in that way, and was suddenly brought up standing by the heaviest and most forbidding wire fence he had ever seen. Yes, there it stretched away through the cottonwoods, straight as a die, back to the angle whence started the southward course he first had noted, and, looking down stream, far as the eyo could reach, he marked it.

"Well," thought Perry, "I've often heard an Englishman's house was his castle, but who would have thought of staking and wiring in half a countyhalf a Texas county-in this hoggish way? How far down is the entrance,

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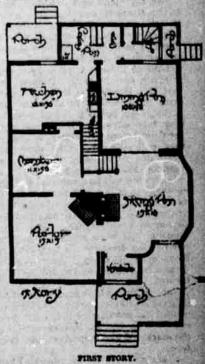
A SENSIBLE FARM HOUSE

Original Plans and Description by Archi-tect L. H. Gibson. In making a plan for a farm dwelling it is in the minds of many that it should be disin the minds of many that it should be distinct in some respects from a town or subset and dwelling. The principal difference, however, is largely in the matter of convenience. In the plan which is here submitted there is a front vestibule, in which may be place wraps, etc., before going into the string room. There is a rear vestibule from whome one may pass from the kitchen, dining room or rear porch to the second floor. In the vestibule is a low closet and a space for a here.



rack. In front there is a parlor, with a grate in it, the smoke from which enters the same stack but not the same flue as the one in the sitting room. There is a bedroom which may be approached either from the sitting room or parlor. The latter door is not necessary, and could be omitted and afford better bed space for that room. It is to be noticed that there is a closet in connection with this chamber. The stairway to the second floor goes to the sitting room. The approach is to a ber. The stairway to the second floor goes to the sitting room. The approach is to a square landing and from thence to the second floor. From the kitchen one passes to the cellar under the front stairway. The usual kitchen conveniences, which have been common to the plans furnished by the writer, are herein included. The rear porch could be inclosed with lattice work to an advantage.

On the second floor are four bedrooms, an alcove, a bathroom and a large number of ample closets. In one instance this house was built with sliding doors between the two side chambers, as indicated by this plan. Atten-

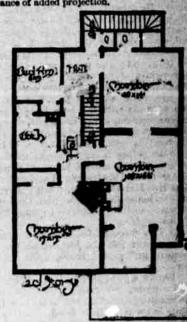


tion is called to the large store closet in rear hall. There is an attic stairway to second floor in the position indicated in sec

second floor in the position indicated in second floor plan.

This house was built in frame at a cost indicated by the schedule which is given. In makes an exceedingly picturesque attracture, well adapted to a country house.

In painting, it is suggested that the first story be a rich buff, the second story a lighter, more yellow color, the body of the galless a light omange tint. The trimmings and shutters, to unite this combination, should be a dark olive green. The under side of the years headily a popular that is the same tint. should be a dark citye green. The under second the porch celling should be the same that as the gable. By trimmings is meant the exterior window and other casings, the porch columns, balusters and rail and gutters molding. The under side of the cornice should be painted same color as second story body. This, with the dark color to the gutter moldings, gives the cornice the appearance. ter moldings, gives the cornice the app ance of added projection.



RECOND STORY. This house was built in Indians as per fel-

lowing prices: SCHEDULE OF COST.
Building, first floor flaish oak, second floor
flaish pine.
Privy vaults.
Cisterns and connections, 50 barrels.
Well, connections and pump.
Well, connections and pump.
Plumbing, cellar sink, kitchen sink, bath
tub, water closet, wash stand, street washer, cistern water.
Four mantels and grates, average cost, \$30.
Furnace. Total..... Louis H. Gibson.

The Toronto Wheel Tourna The Toronto Wheel Tournament.

A tournament will be held in Toronto on Oct. 21 to 26, at which \$1,200 will be given in prizes. A professional seventy-two hour race will occur, in which \$920 will be given—\$500 to the first, \$300 to the second, and \$100 to the third. The entrance fee will be \$55, and one-half must accompany the entry and the other half to be paid before the start. The race will be started on the first day, an will continue up to 10 o'clock each day. If the record is broken, the entrance fee will be returned to the winner, but it will be necessary to ride over 600 miles to obtain any of the money. There will also be a two, three, the money. There will also be a two, three, five and ten mile amateur race each day. There will be several ladies' races and a few children's races. The entrance fee for these will be \$1, and should be sent to F. W. Coulsin, postoffice box 265, Toronto, Canada, before or on Oct. fore or on Oct. 4.

Canada Dogs.

A glance at the Toronto and London bench show reports will show that Canada is well able to hold a good show irrespective of what may be sent from over the border, as most of the entries at both shows were local of from neighboring cities. The breeding of dogs in Canada has made rapid strikes during the last few years. Setters, spaniels, Bedlingtons and black and tan terriers, seem to be their strongest points, although many good terriers of different breeds have come down to our Yankee shows and taken away the money. It is surprising that mastiffs and St. Bernards Yankee shows and taken away the money. It is surprising that mustiffs and St. Bernards do not enter more into popular favor than it the case. There is evidently an open field for some of the typical stock from the best kennels in the United States, and the co shown by Wyoming kennels at Toronto be productive of some good.