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Mary Wendelboe, Claresholm, Alberta, Canada.

The Making of a Dude Rancher.

(9500 Words)

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My name is Cecil Rogers, but my pals mostly call me Buddy. I am ~~14~~ years old and my sister is twenty, but sometimes she treats me as if she was forty and I was five.

We used to live in an eastern city, and my family had lived there for four generations, and in all that time not one of us had ever had anything to do with the soil, --what I mean is--none of us had been farmers or ranchers or even gardeners. When you know that, you can better understand, why I admire my ^D Dad so much, for having the courage to give up all the things, tradition had made him believe were important, and come way out here, to begin life on another plane, so to speak.

Of course, Sis and I think it is a lark, pure and simple, having this perpetual vacation, that's called funning a Dude Ranch. But poor Mother, --I know, she finds it hard to get used to "all those tall men in big hats and longhaired trousers, who are always going or coming in such a hurry, and oh, how they stir up the dust!"

But when we get settled a bit, we are going to build another house, a little farther away from the Corrals, and the boys and I are going to live in this old one, while Mother, Dad and Patricia (that's Sis) can have their quarters upstairs in the new one

The living room, dining room, and kitchen will be on the ground floor and all the bedrooms will be in small separate cabins. Joe, that's Dads partner, has had a lot of experience on other Dude-ranches, and he says, that it's the best system, and what he says, goes.

What really started it, us moving out here, I mean, was Sis being anemic. I know it must sound funny to anyone that knows her, but she was anemic-- say two years ago or less. Our family doctor said so, and he ought to know, I should think.

Well, while I was going to the university, and grinding, let me tell you, Sis had been through the mill. Teas, bridges, dinners, shows, dances, and that telephone ringing from morning till night. But of course, at last it became too much for her, and Dad called the doctor. He looked her over, and after being informed about her unusual activities per. day (or night) he showed us a Calgary paper with an add from ^a ~~the~~ Dude-ranch in the foothills of Alberta.

"That's my ²¹ prescription, young lady." he said. "And you'll have to stay there for four months or more, if you want to be a well woman." Sis was so tired, she didn't care; this was in ^{the} spring; so she and Mother packed, looked up ^{and train} bus connections, and without telling anybody, Sis was off on her quest of health. Mother would have gone with her, but Dad was not feeling extra strong and I boarded home; we had been getting along with just one old servant, who had been staying with us for years, since Sis and I were born, in fact. Although she was a very good cook, and

everything, she could never take care of us, the house, and the cooking.

But Sis had always been ~~an~~ independent, ~~person~~. I know she never took any advice from me, no matter how badly she needed it. Mother didn't let us see if she was worried, and after all, Sis wasn't really sick, just played out.

Some of the crowd she usually trailed with, came asking about her at first, but when they found out that she had gone out West, they apparently forgot all about her, and only two of them ever wrote her a letter.

The rest of the year, until the middle of October, to be exact, was a rest cure, for us, right in the comfort of our own home. No telephone ringing all day, no cars honking up our drive, no ^{body} staying awake half the night, listening to hear, if Patricia remembered to lock the front door.

As far as I'm concerned, I did much better at the spring examinations, than I would have otherwise. Dad was a much better sleeper, than he used to be, and Mother and Katie were not so everlastingly tired and "run off their feet."

Patricia had been writing regularly to Mother all summer, so we all knew when to expect her. After the spring exams, were over, I had been helping Dad in his office (~~he~~ was an insurance man) but really, this was only a sham, as he didn't have any more to do,

than he could do himself quite easily, even without an office boy.

However, I met the train we thought she would be on, but she wasn't on it. I thought to myself "Isn't that just like her?" and drove home for supper. As I drove up, another car drove away from our door. A couple of Patricia's old chums were in it, but they only waved their hands as they passed, and so did I.

When I opened the door, I found the hall cluttered with baggage, and it crossed my mind, that Sis must have come after all, and the car that I had met, had brought her home.

Well, O.K. , it couldn't matter to her who brought her home, as long as she got there. But where was she now? I went out to the kitchen to ask Katie, where Mother and Sis were, but when I opened the door, you could have knocked me down with a feather!

Sis was standing in the middle of the kitchen, looking around, and Mother and Katie were looking at Sis , with their mouths open and with round eyes. Then Sis turned around, saw me in the door, also with my mouth open, like as not, and said: "Hello , there, Cecil," and that broke the spell. Mother just took one step, Sis did the same, and then they were in each others arms. Katie turned around and saw me, and said, "Come in " as if I ^{was} were a stranger, then her eyes wandered again to Sis and Mother. They had broken apart again, but Mother was holding Sis by her shoulder, and looking at her, and Katie and I had to look too.

Holy Smoke! Was that Sis? Brown as a nut, with a beautiful all-over tan, twenty pound at least, heavier, hard as--not nails, but anyway wood--and where, oh where was that high-pitched, chattering voice that used to irritate me so? Gone! Gone with the painted face, the languid movements,¹ Instead, here was Sis, healthy, active but composed, who looked you,² (like a man), (in the eye,) and when she spoke, it was in a low, husky, well-controlled voice.

Katie put supper on, while we waited for Dad, and we all stayed in the kitchen, talking. When Sis gave me her hand, I nearly dropped down dead, from the pressure she gave it, but what puzzled me most was the look, in her eyes, a calculating, measuring look, as if she mentally stacked me up against something or somebody, but what or who I hadn't an inkling of, then.

The next day the news had spread, and there was a bunch of girls who called up. Not one of them talked for more than half a minute, so flabbergasted were they on hearing Sis talk. But Mother told me she had only asked two of them over, the only two, who had taken the trouble to write to her. Also she had asked ^{them} for a special afternoon, not just given them a blanket invitation. Apparently ~~she~~ Sis had developed into a thoughtfully responsible woman. You ~~bet~~ I told Dad, I wanted to be at home that afternoon, if I had to fake a headache, but he laughed at me and said, that curiosity killed ^a the cat, but that I could put the storm windows on that day, if I was so anxious to be at home. This was right up my alley, so

that was settled ; you see. I was nearly crazy, trying to figure out, what it was, Sis was comparing me to. And not only that, but why had she lost that "You're so wonderful" look, she always used to wear, when there were any males around? It used to make me sick to see, ^{it} and now I missed it. Well the day came, and I found out, alright.

Sis had brought a lot of films home with her and they had been developed since, and were delivered at the house at noon. So when Sis and her friends took possession of the livingroom after lunch, I was right there, putting the storm windows on. But the girls didn't make as much fuss, as I thought they would. They just sat quietly on the chesterfield, and looked at the snap-shots Patricia showed them. Occasionally they would laugh and ask a few questions, but mostly they just looked. This was not so illuminating, as I thought it would be, for me. So when I had finished the sashes, I sneaked into the kitchen, to see what Katie and Mother were doing. I got there just in time. Katie was just putting the finishing touches ^{to} on the tea-wagon, before wheeling it into the livingroom. When she was through, I, instead of her, rolled it in and up to the chesterfield. This let me in. Mother came in also, and we all sat around the fire and drank tea (only it was hot chocolate) and ate sandwiXches, three quarter of an inch thick, and made of brown bread! Now Sis had always preferred, no demanded, only the daintiest of sandwiXches, and also of everything else. So I blocked hard to see, what she would say to these. Imagine my surprise, when I actually saw her eat them with apparent

enjoyment--and she ate two and a slice of cake, beside two cups of chocolate! But no matter how puzzled I was, I didn't dare to ask a lot of questions, for if she hadn't changed her disposition, as well as her appetite, she would tease me instead of answering.

Pat had put all her snap-shots into a gorgeous candy box, and after lunch, when her two friends were leaving, Mother and I began to look at them, too. And, by George, some of them were marvelous. Most of them had people in them, and there was the most wonderful scenery, that you can imagine. But most of them were of men and horses! Horses leaping into the air, or standing on their hind legs, or chasing cattle or other horses. But always there were tall, slim fellows, with giant hats, riding or holding these wild animals, or saddling or unsaddling them. Mother shivered, and said, "Surely Patricia has not been around these wild men and horses, taking pictures?"

Sis came in that minute, heard her, and coming over to where we were, sat down. She looked at the picture we held, and said, "No, I didn't take these. You can see, they are not the same size as my camera. They are post-cards. I bought them. They were taken on the fifth of July. They had a big thirty years anniversary stampede, *in* and we all went. See the grandstand there in one corner? And do you notice all the dust? It blurs the picture."

Clarusholm

"But look at this" I dared to ask, Sis acting so human, "What is that fellow doing down in front of the grandstand, choking a poor little calf to death?"

Sis laughed joyously, and said without being patronizing. "Oh he is only tying it up in a hurry, for a

few minutes, trying to beat the record. But I must say, the calf bawled as much as if he was choking it to death."

"Beat what record?" asked Mother, taking the ~~the~~ words right out of my mouth.

"The worlds record~~X~~" said Sis, "though I'm not sure."

"But why should anyone try to see how fast they could tie up a calf; what use or sense is there in that?"

"Don't you want to look at the rest of the snapshots?" asked Sis, and added "I'll explain it to you, after a while, but first I'm going to show you something I have upstairs." With that she left us to run-- imagine, run-- upstairs, and we looked at some more pictures. Sis had quite a few, from the "stampede" in Claresholm. There were lots with riders, some with floats of various sorts, and some of races or something. But she had some swell ones, she had taken herself. A lot of them showed a good-looking, slim, young fellow, he must have been seven feet tall, and he wore one of those giant hats, and hairy trousers, ^{as} so far as we could tell, though Mother thought at first it was a skirt. We had decided to ask Sis about this guy, when that young lady came jingling down the stairs and appeared before our startled eyes---in-costume--/ On her head she wore jauntily a high-crowned, wide-brimmed, deep tan, felt hat, like those in the pictures, she had on a bright green silk shirt, riding breeches of some corded stuff, high-heeled, high-topped boots,--boots mind you -- with little, ² silver, ¹ shiny

spurs, and she carried a little quirt and a pair of tan fringed gauntlets in her hand.

"Well, is that the latest word in riding habits?" asked Mother, when she found her voice, but I guess I just sat there and gave my famous imitation of a ^{claw.} ~~claw.~~

"Not exactly," said Sis, and laughed, "but this is what I have been wearing most of the time, and I thought you would like to see me in it," and she dimpled at the sight of our surprised faces.

"Do you think Katie would die of shock if I went out in the kitchen in this rig?" Rig--what is the world coming to? And she was just going to scare Katie out of a year's growth, when Dad let himself in through the front door. Quick as a flash, Sis stepped to one side, so that she was out of sight of the hall, and then slid into one of the big chairs.

"Sit down, both of you," she whispered, "and when Dad comes in, tell him we have a caller, and introduce me to him."

"Wha--What shal I call you?" asked Mother, who wasn't used to such quick changes.

"Miss West," I said loudly, "How do you like the East!?"

"I would like it better, I reckon, if there weren't so many people. I don't like to breathe air, that has been used," Sis said, and then Dad was in the room, and I was choking in my handkerchief over Pat's reply, while Mother began to introduce "Miss West" to him. But Dad fooled us; he snapped the electric light on, at once, and knew Patricia immediately, though he walked all around her several times before he could take in

all the fine points.

"Well, well, daughter, you look as if you were ready to do something, but what is it?" he said finally, and Sis sat down on his knee, something she hadn't done for the last ten or twelve years, and whispered in his ear. But Dad shook his head, and said firmly; "Can't be done, with business what it is!"

"But then, can't I rent one, once in a while?"

"You can my dear, but is that, -- quite -- well -- swanky enough for you?"

"Oh, yes, Daddy. I know I have been a spoiled, pampered baby, but now I have grown up, don't you see, and just maybe, I have changed some of my standards."

"That's fine, Pat, and I'll see, where I can get you a mount."

"Mount," hooted Sis, "All I want is a horse, Dad, that will let us put a saddle on him. I don't need anything fancy." And off she went in another peal of laughter. If Sis was going to be like this, it wasn't going to be so bad, having her ~~was~~ home again. Well, Dad arranged for her to have a horse four times a week, and she seemed to get a great thrill out of riding. The first time Katie saw her mount, she threw her apron over her head and cried; "She'll be killed." But as she always came back whole, Katie gradually got over her fright, and I think she finally became a little proud of her.

The younger set always had a masquerade on Hallowe'n, and when I suggested to Sis that she should save her "Cow-girl Costume" as she called it,

for that night.--^{she} She had thought it a good idea, and ~~she~~ had been using a conventional habit, when she rode in the park. The day before Halloween a telegram came for Sis; after reading it, Sis went into a conference with Dad, and when this had broken up, Dad asked me to meet the 9:30 train, after having taken the three of them to the dance. Of course I really had no choice, and anyway, an hour more or less doesn't count with me, (~~xxx~~) when it comes to dancing, so I met the 9:30 train, and who do you think was on it? The tall, slim cowboy Sis had so many snaps of, no less! After I had steered him to the car, and we got under way, I had a brilliant idea: I would take him straight to Robinsons, where the party was being held.

But on second thought, that was not so good. It would be better to find out a few things first, and then we would see where we stood..

His name, it appears, was Pat!! Patrick Patterson, and he could dance,-- yes, common ordinary dances,-- and he had his dress-up clothes in his suitcase, that is -- his good riding-breeches, several silk shirts, some silk bandannas, socks, his spurs, and he had even bought himself a new pair of chaps, in Medicine Hat it had been; he had not been able to resist them, they were such beauties.-- When I found out all this, I told him about my plan, and -- hip-hip-hooray,-- he was willing. But he had to get shaved first, "never went to a dance in my life without shaving first."

By now we were home, and as there was nobody to

stop us, I rushed him up to my room, suitcases and all, and I'll say he worked! It didn't take him more time, "than it would take to brand a calf," --I am giving you his very words,-- to wash, shave, brush his hair, and get into his "War-togs". I made him wear, even his chaps and spurs, though he protested vehemently that "nobody but a damn fool would wear chaps and spurs to a dance,"but I promised him,he could take them off,after we had seen what panic he would create by merely entering.. But he didnt like it ,he made that plain,. and if anybody tried to poke fun at him,I wouldnt put it past him to take a poke at them.

The dance was in full swing,when we got there,and we stood in the doorway with a lot of other masked boys, all of whom I knew,till that dance was over. There was a crowd around Sis, as usual, but when she got one look at my companion, she blushed furiously, said,"Pardon me, " in that new, husky voice of hers, and breaking through the circle of admirers, , clasped both her(~~arms~~) hands around Pat's right arm, and said," "Oh, but it's good to see you again, Pat.I was almost homesick for the ranch when I got your telegram."

I was tagging along, getting an earful, but I didn't miss any of the admiring glances that followed Pat and Sis. She steered him straight into the Den, where four tables of bridge were going full blast.When Dad saw us in the door, he gave his hand to an innocent bystander, and came out to us. Introductions were made, and then Dad told him to go ahead and have a good time, if he could,(~~and~~) to come home with us until his business was transacted, and he ended up by saying, he was

sure they would get along fine. After Dad had gone back to his cards, I towed Patrick to the men's dressing-room, where he soon divested himself of chaps and spurs. We went downstairs, while I explained the rules for "cutting in" to him, and after that I only saw him at a distance. Swarms of people seemed to surround him, and I heard a lot of girls exclaim about his tall, slim figure. I did find out what made him seem so tall in the pictures. All cowboys wear boots with three-inch heels, "they are ~~brakes~~ ^{brakes}," says Pat, whatever that means. I think Sis had a good time, that night, I know she ~~danced~~ ^{laughed} a lot, and danced a lot with Pat and others, and Pat was kept dancing pretty steady too, while every girl I danced with, raved about Pat., and "didn't he and Sis look gorgeous, when they danced together, and wasn't he the slimmest thing, and did I think that was a natural wave in his hair?" Bah, girls drive me ga-ga.

We all drove home together ~~that~~ ^{at last,} night, and Pat and I "bunked" together that night. In the morning, or rather next day, after lunch, Dad and Pat went into the library and had a long talk, and that evening Dad told us what had brought Pat to town.

He and his older brother, Joe, had been trying to locate a man, that owned a big tract of land they would like to buy and run as a Dude ranch. They had some money, and thought they would try to get a partner, who also was to put in some money, and help them other-wise, and if only we could find the owner, we could go ahead with the rest of Pat's plans.

Pat and I hunted for that man for four days, and

finally we ^{had} ~~gan~~ him to earth in a little town, thirty miles east of ~~wxxx~~. here. He wanted a terrible high price at first, but Dad soon convinced him, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, and the deal was closed, just a week ⁴ after Pat came to town.

Meanwhile, Sis had been talking to Mother about the ranch and the West, and various people she had met, and often Dad would listen to her with a thoughtful frown. I began to wish, I could go back with Pat and see all the wonders of the rockies, the foothills, and the rolling boundless prairies, not to mention the stunts, Sis told us, the cowboys pulled on the least provocation. But still I was not prepared for the blow when it fell.

Pat would leave on Monday morning, and on Sunday Dad and Mother told us, that if we were willing, we would buy a share in Pat's Dude Ranch, and move out to Alberta!

Sis flew up and out of her chair, in a leap for Dad, gave him a regular bear-hug, kissed Mother, and then slapped me on my shoulder, pulled me up out of my chair, shook me till my teeth rattled, and all the while, she was singing to herself a little tune she *had* picked up out West.; it goes like this: "Home, Home, on the range," --.

"But what about your business, Dad?" I asked him, "and the office buildings, and this house?"

"I am offered a reasonably big sum for the business, ^{and} the furniture, and if I sell, I'll have enough cash to buy a share in Pat's ranch, and a little over. Then, if we are lucky enough to sell this house, too, we will be able to weather the first year or two, even

if we dont do such a rushing businnes at first. And we will still have all our furniture, and all our clothes, We can take our car along, if we cant sell it profitably, so you see, it wont be pioneering, by any means. What do you Kids say ? ". I'll tell the world we said plenty, both at once and in an awfull hurry! When we ran out of breath, Dad said with a smile; "I take it, you mean you are willing to go out there and rough it?"

"Yes, oh, yes, Dad, and the sooner the better. When are we going to leave here?"

"In the spring, if we are lucky," said Dad. But we could see, Mother didn't like to talk about selling the house, and we didn't blame her, so we began to ask Dad questions, Most of them he couldn't answer, and we kept watching for Pat to come down, so we could pump him. When he finally came down, Sis was the first to ask him, where our supposed ranch was located, and this is the answer he gave; "About halfway between Calgary and Macleod, you know where they are, dont you?. Our nearest town is Stavely, but thats such a little village, that maybe you will want to do your trading in Claresholm, thats south of us, as you perhaps remember, or in Nanton, Which is north of Stavely. They are both goodsized towns, with big stores and movies and what-have-you. YYou know the graveled highway runs down from Calgary to Macleod, and we turn off that 2 miles south of Stavely and drive west for about 25 miles.

Of these the first are used a lot in summer; you see, there is a sort of picnic Park 12--14 miles west of Stavely, and thousands of cars use this road. After we get a little past this park, we cross the Willow Creek, and there begins our own land. It is rolling at first, you know, but the western part of it is practically in the Foothills. The main ranchhouse, barns, corrals and chutes are all on an eastern slope, and you can get to them easily with cars and trucks!"

"Tell us some more," said Mother, "how are you going to start this Dude Ranch, how can Patricia and I help, and what is Cecil supposed to do, once we get there?"

"Well, I am afraid I can't tell you all the things that have to be done, but I can give you an idea of the layout, and you can figure out for yourself, how your labor will have to be divided.

There are many buildings, though they are all old. Most of them are built of logs, and so are very substantial and can't be remodeled very easily. We have lots of barnroom for all the stock we will ever have, I guess. The corrals are very sturdy, being made mostly of poles, and there is a little stream crossing our land, close to the buildings, that could easily be dammed up. It used to be a large Ranch, even for us, but it has been sold off in parcels until only about 1/4 of the original land is left. That accounts for the big buildings we have, but the Ranch house itself is not so large, only 6 rooms, but they are all quite big, even if they are not as high to the ceiling as yours here."

"Who cooks for us?" Dad wanted to know. "Pat is not a very good cook, and I am afraid Mother's feet would give out." "Oh, you will only have to cook for yourselves," said Pat, "maybe Katie would like to go out west too. The men have a Cookshack or messhouse of their own, and then the bunkhouse, where they sleep and keep their belongings. But when or if we get any guests, there will have to be a hostess, who receives people, looks after their comforts, listens to their complaints and see that they are taken care of, when they are ill. Do you think you can ~~take care~~ handle that end of our enterprize, Mrs. Rogers?"

"If I can get used to it gradually, you know, and not have it thrust at me all at once, I think I can," said Mother bravely, and for one fervently hoped, she had not bit off more than she could chew.

"Dad," I asked him, "what made you even consider buying into Pat's scheme?" for this had puzzled all of us a good deal. "Well, son," he said, "the insurance business is dead in this town, and there are too many men in it who can't get out without getting ruined, but I can get out, and by George, I will, now I have this chance. There you have it in a nutshell."

"But do you think, you will like it? You haven't any idea, about what it's really like, you know?"

"Don't I, young man? Well, if I haven't, all the time I have spent the last 33 years reading Cowboy- and Western- and Ranch Stories can be marked a total loss, but I don't think

it will turn out that way. You can learn a lot of things from good fiction, if you want to. You didnt know, I had the officeboy cart away a whole library of Western Magazines, just before you started to come down to the office every day. I liked to read them better than anything else, but when that story was broadcast, about the man, who went plumb crazy over wild west stuff, and gave his business away and ruined his life generally, I decided to stop reading so many, and go in for something else."

"I wondered a lot, what had made you so familiar with the business of ranching," said Pat. "The average easterner is nearly as ignorant as a cockney, about us and our ways, but that explains it."

"If it should turn out so, that you dont make it pay, John, would it not be better, if we only rented this house, instead of selling it? Then we would always have a roof over our heads."

This was Mother, who is not yet willing to face the uprooting, we will have to undergo.

"Whats the use of a roof, my dear," said Dad, "if its some odd 2000 miles away from you? No, if-- if we can sell it, we would be much better off. We cant look after it anyway, so far away, and it would only be a great worry to us."

"Well, Dad, If we have to sell, why not see, if Mr. Jenkins is in town? You know he wanted to buy out here last year, and he may still want to. Let me look him up,

and
AN maybe bring him out and look at the place."

"Yes, you do that Son, while I see about other things.

Now dont begin packing, Mother, we will be here all winter,

and will get lots of comfort out of this old house yet, if we dont start packing too soon."

This finished that conference, but we men adjourned to the library, where we figured and planned, as much as we could, on such long distance necessities as fencewire, staples, bricks for chimneys, shingles, advertising and gravel for roads, and we were still at it, when the suppergong rang.

PAT went home as planned, and the winter passed eventually. Dad and I wound up all the details of the sale of the officebuilding. With everybody hard up, it was a terrible job to collect, what people owed us. We went out a good deal, for everybody seemed to think, we were going into exile, which didn't make Mother feel more cheerful about it all. Sis hardly went out with her old crowd anymore. I heard her tell Mother once, "She simply could not stand an evening of that crowds silly chatter without flying off the handle, and added as an afterthought; "And that would'nt help anything either."

WE went to a hotel 2 weeks before Easter and shipped all our furniture on ahead. We sold the house, but only got about three fourths of what it was worth, but we got cash, and that was what we wanted. We had also sold the car, and Easter Monday saw us ready to leave our home town. Sis and I had become almost friendly, for the first time in our lives, and she told me once, she was simply dying to be gone, and so was I. But poor Mother how she hated to leave her friends, her garden she had improved every year, and her lovely, wellplanned house for she knew not what shack in the wild and wolly west. She had one ray of comfort

Katie had refused to leave us, she was determined to go west with us, and I know it helped Mother a whale of a lot to have her to fall back on.

We didnt mind the trainjourney a bit, though after we got out on the praries, the view was very monotonous. But Mother had her knitting, and Katie to talk to, and the rest of us talked and played cards, or talked to other passengers, and the time passed pleasantly enough for us.

In the beginning the whole world seemed covered with snow, but when we got into SASatchewan, it became snow and mud and we thought it would be worse in Alberta, but the farther west we traveled, the warmer it got and we saw neither snow nor mud, when we drew near to Calgary..

This puzzled us a good deal, but when Dad mentioned it to the conductor he explained it casually as the work of the "Chinook". We asked Sis, but she was no wiser. At last a fellow passenger took pity on our ignorance and explained it to us. That was the first time any of us heard about the warm wind, that blows over the mountains from the southwest, melting the snow at an unbelievable rate, and sometimes even starts the grass to grow in the middle of January, if we could believe our informant.

Joe and Pat met us at the depot in Calgary, and I do think, Sis might have shown a little more restraint in her greeting of them, though they seemed to think she acted perfectly all right. Both Dad and I took to Joe Right away, he looked both intelligent and dependable.

We stopped at a hotel over night, and

in the morning we set out on the last leg of our long journey. We drove south, apparently at the very base of the foothills for some time, passing thru many small towns. I especially remember Okotoks. That's the railroad town for X Turner Valley, where all the many gas and oil wells are, and say, it smelled to high heaven. Joe just laughed, when Mother complained about it, and said, we would soon be out of it, and just to wait a while, til the roads got a little better, then we would all go up and see the "valley".

Then came High River, that's the Prince of Wales's Town, or rather his nearest big Town, as his ranch is some 20 miles west of High River, practically straight north of "our ranch", and we are going to go around that way, when or if we go up to Turner Valley. ~~that's a~~ ~~we~~ ~~Pat~~ and Sis have invented a name for our ranch, that's a wow! The P. Up and down; Dad says its very good, but Mother says its fantastic, and so it is, but maybe it will draw the "dudes," you never can tell.

Imagine my excitement, when Joe offhand told us, there had been a goldrush not so long ago, a little north and west of our place, but it had turned out, as it usually does, when the crowd got there, there had been a landslide or a 3 foot fall of snow, and nobody found anything any more. But for awhile the papers were full of rumors about silver, gold and even platinum, that was supposed to have been analyzed or assayed or whatever it is, they do to ore. Dad wanted to know, if it had been like oldtime gold rushes, but Joe and Pat laughed and said no, there were too many Mounties handy for that.

Then Dad and Joe began to talk about why the

mounted Police had taken over the policing of the whole province, and no more was said of the goldrush.

B. But Sis and I talked about it for miles, and we surely wished we had been out here then, it was only a couple o of years ago, Joe said.

We didn't stop anywhere except at Nanton for Dinner at the hotel there. Joe wanted to get home before sundown. He and Pat had bought a good, used 7 passenger Chalmers in Calgary, and had only paid half of what we got for our old car. It was lucky we didn't take ours out here, and then try to sell it.

Well, we didn't quite get home, but we drove thru the big east gate, just as the sun went down, and it was in the queer, yellow, unearthly light, Sis called the afterglow, that we rolled to a stop in our own yard, just as a slim, gray-haired man came out of one of the buildings, and pounded on an iron disk nailed beside the door.

"What a gong" said Dad! "Wat a racket," said Mother, but Sis said just one word; "Chuck!"

W
When the cook saw us, he came down to the car, recognized Joe and Pat, and hurried in "to set some more plates for you folks." During supper, that sure hit the spot with me, we found out, our freightcar had come, and a lot of things had been hauled out to the ranch, including a lot of bedding, and several beds. A fire was laid in both stoves in the two big bedrooms in the main house, and Sis, Katie and I fell to as soon as supper was over, and made up a big bed in each of them, with Katie's single bed in a corner of Mother's room. There was plenty of blankets, and we were so dead tired of the long ride, we turned in, as

soon as we had the rooms warmed up and the beds made.

Dad, who had stayed in the Cookshack, talking with the men, came in soon after we had finished our labors, and both he and I fell asleep, as soon as our heads touched the pillows.

In the morning that clanging gong woke us up, as soon as it was light enough to see, and you just bet, I looked. You know, I had never been on a ranch before, and I must have seemed awfully green to all I talked to.

However, when they laughed at me, I laughed with them, and before night I knew all the men on the place by their first names, and they called me Bud.

4 of the men were carpenters, and they were busy putting up small cabins, shacks they called them, with two rooms in each. We didn't know then, how many of these we would need, but they were building 6 as a starter, and hoped we would hire them again later, to build a lot more. The lumber we got from a sawmill a few miles west of us, our boys hauled it with lumberwagons and horses.

Dad had been advertising in papers and magazines all winter, preparing for this summer's harvest, and soon there began to be a lot of mail.

Mother had to look after that, with Sis helping her, when she had too many letters to answer, and it was a good thing, Dad had brought his typewriter along and that Sis had brains enough to learn to use it.

I soon got to be a regular mailman, driving to

town, two or three times a week, and bringing home supplies and simply sacks of mail.

We had a dozen gentle saddle-horses. Then the four cowboys each had two of their own, but Sis and I didn't have any of our very own, until there was a sale of horses in High River; there was stock there from the E.P. ranch, --that's the Prince of Wales's ranch, and he keeps some of the best in the country.

Dad and Joe went up in the car, and Dad drove it back again, while Joe rode and led the horses they had bought.

Sis got a lovely yellow horse, "as easy to ride as a rocking chair" the boys say, but mine is black as coal, a dandy, longlegged fellow, who lives up to his name, "Comet!" Patricia's horse is "Goldie" and she raves about her morning, noon, and night. Nobody has had time to grouch or quarrel this summer, we have been too busy to bother.

Katie began to run our housekeeping affairs as soon as the freight cars were unloaded, and the stuff hauled out, and I haven't heard Mother complain once about our way of living. Sis has worked as hard as Katie, moving and arranging furniture, carpets, beds and stoves. It was a good thing, she got over her anemia before this, or I'm sure it would have killed her, this having to work like a scrub-woman. And speaking of health, after only a few months out here, I find I am growing taller, and also broader! I hardly dare believe I won't be a "runt"--how I hate that word,--all my life, but I'll tell the world, I am glad of it!

It is never very cold, as a rule, after the middle of May, and then is, when the open season on Dudes begins. We had to meet trains and busses, almost every day, and our cabins were filled before the first of June.

We had to keep carpenters at work all May and June, putting up cabins, and even so, we had to put a couple of older ladies in Dad's and my room, while we slept in the bunk-house. I couldn't fall asleep the first night, and darn near choked to death, listening to the many assorted snores, and not daring to laugh.

Joe and Dad were the bosses. Joe was boss over the men, the horses and the carpenters, while Dad kept the books and looked after the correspondence, with Sis helping him, now Mother had so many other things to do. Katie had to take a hand too, looking after the girls we had, to keep the cabins in order, and the laundry, not to mention having to help Jack, the cook, who was a returned man, plan his menus, so there would be variety enough to suit everybody.

We had to buy our vegetables from the farmers east of us, also our butter and eggs, and it made alot of running around in the car nescessary, and when I did it, Inoticed, I could go alone, but when Sis had to go, she always managed to wait til Pat was thru' with whatever he was doing, and mostly he went with her, -to open gates!:-

but Dad says, next year he will get a chinaman-gardener to come and live here. There is enough water in our creeke to irrigate aasquare mile, and we wont need any more vege--tables than that.. Lots of other ranches have Chiniks or Japs gardening for them, and its a good system, if you have water.

Pat looks after the Dudes, he gets up Picnics, Mountainclimbing parties, Fishing and Hunting Trips, and it is him, thats responsible for them and their activities.

Sis helps him a pbt, she can better get around the men. Pat is so goodlooking, the girls are all crazy about

him, but the only one he can see, if I am not mistaken, is Sis, and I don't know, how she feels about him, though she seemed to be keen about him in the winter, when he was staying with us in town. I can't tell about Sis anymore, since she has lost that "You are so wonderful" look. But I do know, she didn't want him to go to the big Stampede in Calgary--very decidedly not!

In fact, they quarreled violently about it once, and Dad was in it too, and he sided with Pat, But Sis went into her room mad, and didn't want any supper!

You see, Pat had been going to a lot of small Rodeos and Stampedes, and he has taken a lot of first Prizes in various contests, and now of course he feels, he has to go to the Calgary Stampede, because that is the biggest affair of this kind in Canada, (or this part of it), so he can see, how he stacks up against the world's best, --and I don't see, what 's to stop him.

But Sis was all "het up" about it. She said, it was too dangerous, and he would be risking his health and maybe his neck, that he thought more of a little applause than of his friends feelings, and more in the same line. --

But Dad, when he showed up on the scene, pointed out, that Pat was free, white and 21, didn't have any strings on him, and why was she suddenly so worried about it, when Pat had been doing this sort of thing for years??

To this Sis only said, that she was sure he would get hurt this time, and then she shut up like a clam, went into her room and slammed the door!

However, Pat had to, go or forfeit a lot of money he already had paid down, to get a place on the various contest list, and all the dudes, who had seen Pat in action, on Sundays,

when other boys often came over to visit, wanted to go too, so it ended up by us all going, except 2 of the boys, the cook and Katie, who would not "go and see all them wild men and horses" "if she was paid for it!"

The Dudes took the Bus at Stavely, the boys and Pat rode up on their own horses, Dad and Mother, Sis and I rode up in the Chalmers, and we also took two "Schoolma'ns," that at the moment were the only Ladydudes we had. Before we left, we all agreed to make the ~~Hotel~~ Alexandra our headquarters, and that's where most of us put up. .

Palliser

I am not going to describe the Stampede, that would be too much free advertising for Calgary, but I wish I was able to tell you about the giant Parade, that took two hours to pass a given point.

We got seats in the grandstand right away, and as we had brought two pair Opera- and two pair Field-glasses with us, we didn't miss much of what went on in the Arena, let me assure you.

Mother had'nt an Idea at first, what it would be like, and twice Dad and I thought she had fainted. Then the weather was terribly hot, 95 above, and the heavens were like a brass bowl, why people back east can have no ~~idea~~ conception of, how hot it was,.

And then after all, nothing happened to Pat, tho he took some daredevil chances, or that was the way it looked to me. But when the dust had all settled, Pat emerged as the Worlds Champignon buckinghorse Rider, and also the North American Calf roping Champion, Time 18

seconds, as the loudspeakers announced to the world.

The Stampede lasted a week, from Monday til Saturday, and we enjoyed every minute of it. But the most fun of all we had at the frontier Dance, Friday night. They have it every year, and a noisier, jollier crowd you never saw in your life! 'Nearly everybody wears those big, 10 gallon hats, riding breeches and silke-shirts, and thousands of people are dancing in the square in front of the CPR station and the Palliser Hotel, the big ballroom is also jammed, several bands are placed at strategic points, everybody dances and sings if they feel like it, and a good time is had by all.'----

WE came back to the hotel early, because Sis was afraid her dress^v could'nt stand the strain anymore, and already one of her shoulderstraps had given way. Dad and Mother were still up, watching the crowds mill around in the street and the square, but we were so tired, we soon gave up the struggle and went to bed.

We didn't see any of the boys again until Sunday morning at home. We drove home late on Saturday, but Pat and the other boys came home in the morning, before even the cook was up, and they came in to breakfast as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred since their last meal there.

In the afternoon--it was Sunday, you know,-- I saw Pat come up and speak to Sis, who was loafing in the hammock on the east porch.

She took her big hat from its peg, and they walked off, up thru the trees, that border the stream, w

where the Dudes do most of their practise fishing.

I didn't see them come back, but that night Sis wore a big, bluewhite diamond solitaire, and Pat and her talked on the porch for hours.

The next day DAd and Joe had a conference, and afterward Dad told me, Pat had put in some capital, and from now on owned a third share in the P up and down, and also that Pat and SIS intended to be married around Thanksgiving!!!...

Holy smoke, when has all this been cooked up, and how could I miss seeing, which way the wind was blowing "Well I can see now, how I have been kept with my nose to the grindstone, so I wouldn't notice anything, and it worked, I'll say it worked!"

Mary Wendelboe.

~~Box 204.~~ Claresholm Alberta.

The characters in this story are all fictitious and any resemblance to persons living is purely co-incidental