

FARM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST.

BY W. R. D.

The southwest is today a nation of home builders. Those who have taken up their abode upon the broad plains of Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas and the Indian Territory, are not the restless boomers of a score of seasons ago who moved about constantly in their prairie schooners, and who had no permanent home. The constant stream of humanity that has poured

there have bought homes and settled down for the remainder of their lives. In Kansas, where the people a score of years ago were bent on getting away, are found a well content class, especially among the agriculturists.

Despite the fact that the southwest is today far from being sparsely settled, government land experts claim that by



In Pioneer Days.

into the southwest in recent years has been a crowd of sturdy agriculturists and town builders, men who had come to stay.

What more convincing proof than the fact that out of 80,000 people who settled in one state in one year, 70,000 of them remained and voted at the first election. A gigantic increase for a community, was it not? But such was the case.

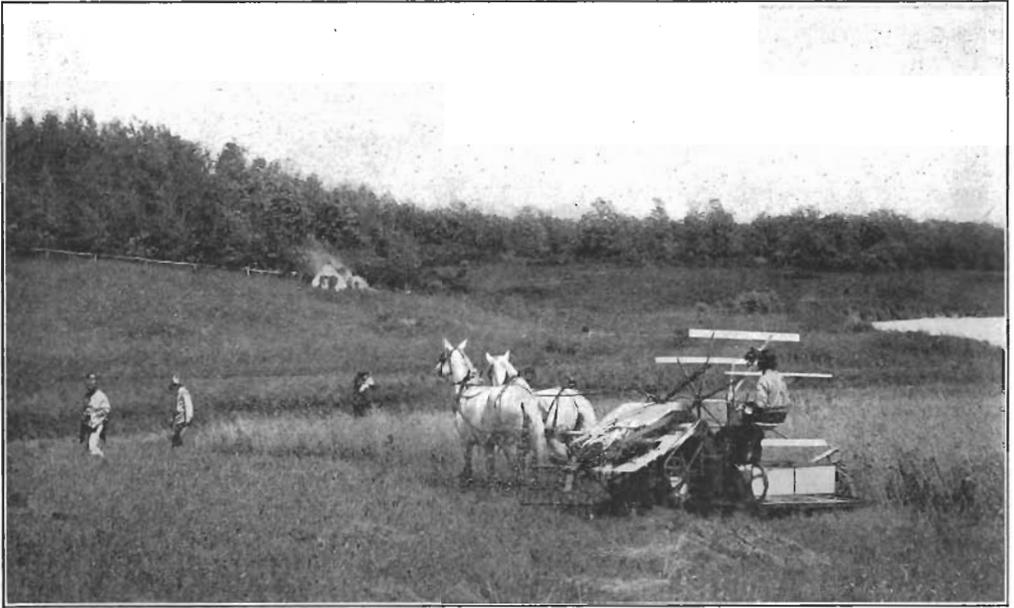
Oklahoma has shown remarkable growth in recent years and most of the thousands of homeseekers who have gone

modernized systems of farming that are going into vogue, and the combination of the cattle ranching with crop growing, the southwest will support a population of twenty million additional people. These people are going into the southwest at the rate of from ten to twenty thousand a month. Since the railroads have organized cheap excursion rates from the middle west to the southwest the farmers from all parts of the United States have clamored for an opportunity not only to

gaze upon but to settle in the land of sunshine. Even in far away New England colonists are organizing into bands to emigrate to the southwest. The opportunities for the home builder are many. Cheap land is in plenty and fortunes are being accumulated every season on the farms and ranches of Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas and Indian Territory and Missouri.

Individuals have grown rich in farming in the southwest in recent years and the opportunities are even better now than ever before. The success of the Miller Brothers with their "101" ranch in northern Oklahoma has already been related

with ranches in the Creek Nation, became rich in the southwest. He is worth perhaps a million dollars. W. E. Halsell, of Vinita, I. T., owns 180,000 acres of grazing land in the Panhandle of Texas. He settled in the Indian Territory a poor man. Meyer Harff of San Antonio, Texas, is today worth two million dollars, having made it all in careful management of a cattle ranch in Crockett County, which he continues to manage in the new farm-ranch fashion. John Kennedy of Corpus Cristi, Texas, owns 400,000 acres in southwestern Texas. He started a score or more of years ago with nothing but ad-



Indians at Work.

in these pages. Their ranch comprises 50,000 acres of ranch and farm land which yields them from \$75,000 to \$100,000 profit annually. John T. Stewart, who owns several hundred farms in Kansas and forty or fifty in Oklahoma, and is many times a millionaire, made it all in wheat growing and the buying of land when it was cheap. He went to Kansas thirty years ago with only a few hundred dollars, and by implicit faith in the soil he made himself rich. M. M. Sherman, who owns 40,000 acres in Western Kansas, accumulated his fortune in the ranch business in that section. Mr. W. H. Spaulding, a wealthy cattleman,

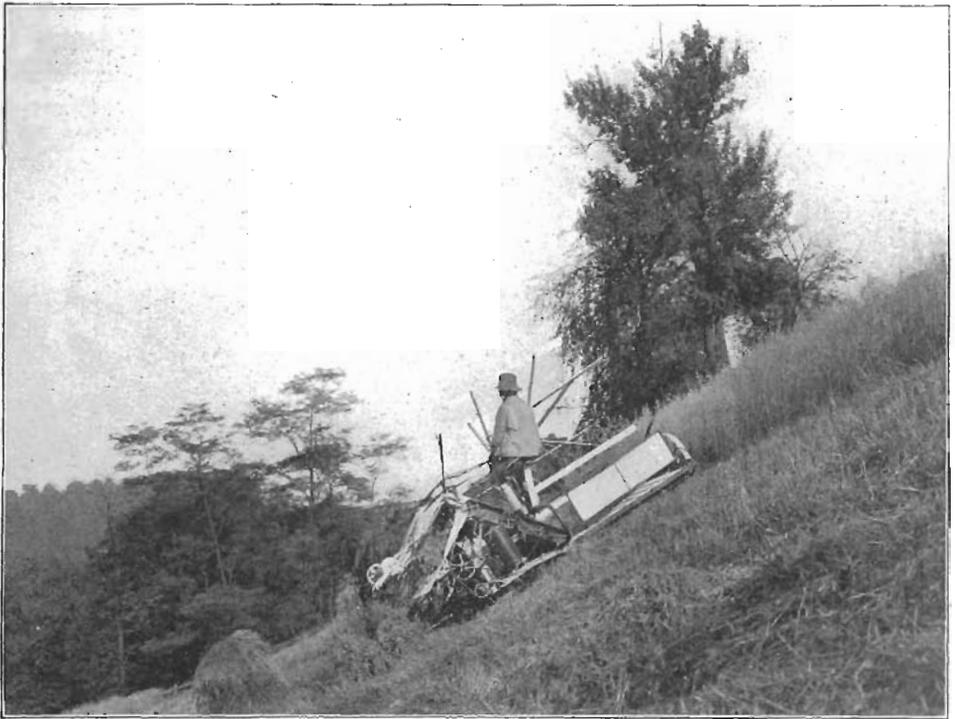
mirable perseverance. Ed. C. Lasatar has a herd of 20,000 steers the year around, roaming over Duval, Star and Higald counties. He secured them all through faith and hard work in the section of domain where he is a man of great power and affluence today. W. C. Greene and a number of capitalists in the East have recently formed a corporation to buy seven million acres of land in Texas for farming purposes. David Rankin of Tarkio, Mo., started farming on a small scale thirty years ago; today he is a millionaire, having made his money by close application to the soil. Scores of others have

been equally successful in fortune building.

Since the rapid settlement of the southwest the cattle business has lost its once free reign of the soil. Ranchmen are compelled to control their pasture land and figure closely upon the sustenance necessary for the fattening of each steer. Fences are now erected at considerable cost, and when pastures run short of grass, the herds must be put on feed at heavy expense. Consequently the economics of modern cattle ranching need

march of civilization is due to congestion of the cattle business, its crowding into a small area as compared to former years. But the cattlemen are making money just the same, even in larger sums than they did when they were called kings and wore wide hats and clanking spurs. Better business methods are required and herein lies the story of their success.

A dozen years ago a Texas cattle man asserted that twenty-five acres of grass land was sufficient for the fattening of one steer. Today an equally successful



Farming in the Ozarks.

the strictest of business judgment if profits are to be realized. The business of cattle ranching, especially in the southwest, where land is more and more in demand, is no longer the mere turning loose of vast herds upon the plains, and allowing them to fatten and prosper of their own accord. From the time the small yearlings are placed in the barnyard of the modern cattle ranch of the southwest, until driven out of the stock car at the yards of the marketing place, their owners are under a constant strain. The onward

rancher allows three acres. Better blood is being bred into the range cattle of today. So the cattle ranch of today is not a cattle ranch at all, but a farm run on a large scale. Take a 50,000 acre tract of land formerly used as a cattle ranch. Not less than 15,000 acres of this would now be in cultivation and 5,000 acres in alfalfa. The remainder in pasture land. Old rangers would have scouted sowing a portion of their pasture in cereals for feeding purposes, but here is where the farmer-ranchman today accumulates his wealth.

A visit to the cattle and farming country of the southwest of today is not without picturesque interest. The scenery is beyond ordinary description. The people are hospitable, the air fills one's lungs and clears the most clouded brain. Modern ideas have been adopted in everything, the rural southwest is indeed more modern than one would believe who has never paid a visit to it. The people are industrious, and there are few who sit in the shade of their sod huts on a hot summer's afternoon gazing at mirages on the plains and dreaming of good times that are to come. The sod huts are few and far between while the era of prosperity for which the pioneers waited and suf-

With him later I attended some of the frontier functions. They were conducted according to the rules of well organized society, and in the ranch houses, even the cowboys came to the table wearing coats, and using the best of manners. Nowadays the only really rough dressed people are tenderfeet who come out clad in buckskin suits with the purpose of living the life of the cowboy of other days. These fellows are "guyed" so unmercifully that they soon adopt the fashion of the natives. Despite the fact that the west is yet far from thickly settled they have an excellent system of social amusements, and life is far from dull or lonely. The people are liv-



On an Oklahoma Wheat Ranch

fered, has already arrived. The virgin soil is yielding to their efforts.

I boarded a train one clear morning in mid-summer bound for the cattle ranches of short-grass Kansas, a typical cattle country of the present day in the great southwest. There were crowds in the bare coaches—people in modern styles of dress. Women whose bearing bespoke cultured training boarded the coaches along the line, men who were said to be rich cattlemen appeared in the plain dress of common citizens, and cowboys wore none of the fancy trappings of frontier days. On the train that carried me out was a young man whose relatives owned an extensive ranch. He was a University student, and dressed in the latest mode.

ing a happy life, accepting the problems of life after the fashion of a philosopher.

To the veteran tourist in the southwest, the recollection of train travel brings horrible fancies. Even the railroad men admitted the roughness of their tracks, the dirty coaches and ill-accommodations along the line. But they could not well afford any better, for travel in early frontier days was far from brisk, the only business of extensive revenue coming from the transportation of cattle to the markets. These mixed passenger trains had a schedule which few of them followed. They were apt to stop along the way and shoot prairie chickens if an opportunity was presented. Cattle trains nearly always took the right-of-way. But now what

a change has been wrought. The Frisco System, with its famous fast train, the "Meteor," ploughing through the southwest, and other railroads with their fliers, the man who wishes to go from one town to the next barely has time to become well arranged in his seat before he must get off again. The coaches are equipped in elegant fashion, the engines that draw these trains are of modern pattern and the work that the railroads in the southwest have to do is something marvelous.

The trainmen stick close to the motto of speed and schedule time. The addition

of settlers, who have their troubles and the business affairs that need quick transmission to other parts.

The subject of irrigation has assumed national importance. The arable portion of public domain has been exhausted. With the enormous influx of foreigners, seeking homes in our midst, our rapidly growing population has forced attention to the vast area of land practically valueless without water. The national government should provide streams for the arid regions and relieve the congested farming population of certain sections of the East.



Rice harvest in Texas, near Houston.

of so many new towns along the lines of every railroad has caused this severity upon the part of the railroad men who were once so accommodating as to stop between stations and allow passengers to alight nearer their place of residence. Naturally both passenger and freight traffic have increased since the settlement of the country. Thousands of additional helpers are required, and stations that one year ago were cared for by one agent must needs have several to say nothing of one man to attend to the telegraphing, which likewise increased with the influx of set-

President Roosevelt said recently that the government desired to settle the arid west, to dispose of this land to settlers who would build homes upon it, and to accomplish this water must be brought within their reach. So it seems that the government will do something after all. Congress passed an act in June, 1902, which provides that the receipts from the sale and disposal of public lands in sixteen of the states and territories shall apply to the construction of irrigation works for the reclamation of arid lands. A restriction is placed on the sale of irrigated lands and