

YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM YOURSELF

by

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(Onoto Watanna)

I was tired of writing and sick of New York. I felt like a poor little human fly caught in the cogs of its mighty machinery. An immense nostalgia took possession of me—a longing for something other than I had known. Writing became a sort of torment—something I had literally to drive myself to. Many a time I have laid my head down among my papers and pencils and cried—hopelessly, for there seemed no escape for me. There were many dependent upon me. I suppose I was in a sort of pathological condition.

I had written hundreds of short stories and eighteen novels—all concerned with Japan. I was "labelled" Japanese. The little oriental blood in me did not make me a real "Jap" any more than the drop of French in me made me a Frenchwoman. However, my Japanese stories were enjoying a vogue. One of them sold over 200,000 copies and was translated into nearly every language. Nevertheless, I dreamed of the day when I could escape from the treadmill of writing about a subject I did not love. Editors and publishers discouraged my efforts in ~~other directions~~. They said to me: "Stick to your last. You are doing fine!" Perhaps I was, but vogues ~~were~~ ^{one hand up} and my readers probably were as tired of reading about little Japanese women as I was of writing about them.

Came a day when publishers no longer made me tempting offers of large advance royalties; when editors ceased to solicit stories by me. I said to myself:

"I can write another type of story. This is my opportunity to get away from Japanese tales".

So I turned out three anonymous stories. I submitted them anonymously to editors, sold them anonymously and they were published anonymously. They ran in three well known magazines, the Century, the Saturday Evening Post and Hearsts Magazine.

Certainly they justified my conviction in my ability. But then a curious phase came over me.

I was like one who had been running for a long time in a race. Mentally, I was breathless. Now when assured that I could escape from the ~~sorrows~~ of writing Japanese stories, I found myself unable to write. Previously writing to me had always been accomplished with facility. I did my best work writing very swiftly, while the plot was still hot in my mind. Now though my brain teamed with plots and themes, when I sat down to write it refused to function. Only the baldest, coldest phrases, stilted and uninspired came. A terror possessed me that now I was done for —written out.

I had lost my single talent. And I was still, comparatively speaking, a young woman!

During this period, someone was saying to me almost daily:

"Why write love stories. Live one. Lets cut all this out. Marry me, and we will go out west—northwest—out to some big country—a country in the making! What do you say?"

He was a big fellow, the kind one calls a man's man. About his personality there was a dominating, fine, clean sort of strength. He had steady, keen, kind blue eyes and a chin, hair of a nondescript blonde color and one of those fine, straight noses that are somehow typically English. I had been holding him at arm's length for one big

reason. I had three children! I wanted to go ~~the way with him~~ with him, but I couldn't myself to dump my troublesome progeny upon him. Many a time I went into minute details as to what it meant to have three wild, husky, noisy children in a house. I painted too, in black colors, all of my own defects. Didn't make the slightest impression on him. All I got was:

"I'll take a chance on you, and as for the kids, I love them. Have'nt any of my own and its fine to have a ready made family".

Besides his arguments I had to listen to the pleas of my three children, all stoutly for him and working in his interests. Indeed my little girl was for a long tome firmly convinced that my husband married me because he wanted my children. Also I was greatly ~~convinced~~ one day to overhear a blackmailing conversation between my youngest son, then aged about eight, and my prospective husband. Said Mike: "Gimme ten cents or I won't ask my mother to marry you today!"

Anyway, he won!

I packed all my goods and chattels, including my children, and going aboard train with my new husband, I left behind me the hectic City of New York where I had lived for fifteen ~~odd~~ years.

We went directly out to the Northwest. My husband had been a shipping man. That is to say, he ~~was~~ one of the owners of a large lighterage firm in New York. He had come from people who had "followed the sea in their youth and finished on the farm", but the farms they had finished on were on Long Island. He was transplanting himself, with me and my children, to the "last of the big lands", a term applied to Alberta in Northwestern Canada. He was not, however, going out as a tenderfoot, for he had been "raised" on a farm. With a couple of hundred thousand dollars, ~~comparatively~~ youth, magnificent health, a clear brain, considerably above the average and a distinct executive ability, which had made him a success in ~~his~~

~~business~~ ^{The business} in the competitive center of New York, he had every reason to believe that he would make a success of ranching, and bring to it moreover a certain rational business sense, which is deplorably lacking in present day methods of farming.

First of all we bought a 640 acre grain farm fifteen miles from Calgary, a thriving, boom city whose dependence is largely upon the agricultural ^{mineral} resources of the province. My husband built a model ranch. Our buildings were all modern and up to date. We had ~~implement houses~~ ^{special buildings} to house the implements over the winter, instead of leaving them out as was the custom of the country, a waste, my husband said, of at least 35% of their value. We had cattle sheds 125 feet long, where, through fenced lanes our cattle were able to come for shelter from storms and for water. During an unexpectedly savage blizzard, in which hundreds of cattle perished, trapped in coulies and gulches, or against fence lines, we lost not a single head, and neighbors who had laughed at the newcomers "putting up fancy sheds, when the cattle can rustle for themselves" laughed no longer. ~~They had lost most of their cattle.~~ Other sheds began to go up all around us in fact.

Up to this time my only experience with country life, was that gathered from owning a house at Orienta Point, Mamaroneck, where I lived for three years. ~~I knew the Boston Post and daily well.~~ Farm Life was a revelation to me. Sometimes I felt like one in a dream. It seemed incredible that it was actually I, used to the teeming, seething throngs of a great city, who was living now on an Alberta ranch. The great distances, the remarkable vistas, the incredible horizons, the mirages and the phenomenon of sky and earth merged into one great brooding haze, seemed to set us apart from all the world. Indeed we seemed to be on the top of the world, looking out into space. There was no limit to the distances about us. I could look to the north, the east, the south and the west and all I saw was ~~wasteland~~, rolling prairie, dim brown under a sky that was eternally gilded with sun.

Indeed I have seen the sun blazing through even a storm. I suppose what is why they call the country "Sunny Alberta". It is rightly named.

We had come in the Spring and the crop was going in. It was a great sight to see the men upon the land. The soil was rich, black and loamy. Part of the land was virgin soil and the plows were turning over for the first time ~~the soil~~

Our men were of a type I had never come into contact with before — ~~men inclined toward socialism~~ overall men. I had always ~~had socialistic tendencies of a sort~~ That is today, I believed that all men ~~were equally, or rather, perhaps I might put it this way, all believed that~~ all men should have been equal. I never could fathom the eternal injustice of a law or scheme of things which hoisted one man above the shoulders of men and ground another down to the earth.

~~never~~
I have been reconciled to the great inequalities that exist in life.

In a ranching country like Alberta there is really no such thing as "caste". ~~although it was a very big business~~ I liked this. We were a little democracy in ourselves. Of course, I won't say that I found unmitigated joy ~~in~~ on sitting down at a table where eight or ten men, in soiled overalls ~~noisily~~ ^{of men} fed. However, at this time we were building, and we had no separate cook house or cook car for our men, and we made the best of the situation.

~~Sitting~~ I acquired a strange sort of feeling for those workmen. ~~It was~~ ^a ~~deep~~ respect and ~~even~~ I might say ~~admiration~~. They were doing a real work; they were contributing to the upkeep of the world. There was not a parasite or slacker among them. And then they were all so very human — all mothers' sons, with something ~~that appealed~~ helpless about them that appealed to the maternal instinct in me. They were always coming to me with awkward requests for this or that little favor—a needle a bit of thread, ~~the~~ wool and other small things. One of them, a young, fair Englishman knitted his own socks, and knitted them well too. Another, a man from Montanna mended his clothes in the most amazing way.

He tied strings around the holes. Another had the habit of muttering to himself "Get thee behind me Satan". I asked him once what he said that for, and he said he was speaking to certain cravings within him that were ~~fright~~ striving to force him back to the booze. We had one boy, whose voice was like a silver bell. We could hear him singing in the fields all the way across the prairie to the house. Sound carries far in still air like that. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

I think perhaps city people are too prone to judge a man by the cut of his coat, the angle of his hat, the crease down the front of his pants ~~note~~ I use the homely word "pants". We don't say trousers on a ranch. ~~White hands and a white collar will not make a man.~~ I remember there was one old rancher who used to say: "Fists ain't made to hit the other fellow with. They're meant to grip around implements. They're meant for work. Thats what the Lord made hands for—to work, and there ain't no grief that hard work won't cure.". Seems to me theres something to that homely bit of philosophy.

On a Sunday our men would "doll up" in their best. They would go then a-riding or a-a-courting. ~~We had~~ One boy used ~~and~~ grease on his hair. It shone like t e morning sun. Another—a Yank, who had drifted out to Alberta from heaven knows where —always brought forth on Sunday a pair of fine white spats. With these, a clean shirt and Sunday suit, Lem made a great hit with our nearest neighbor's youngest girl.

To me the growing grain was like a miracle. It shot up from the bare earth and leaped along overnight. It grew to be as tall as a man and as thick as a forest. We used to go out into the grain fields of an evening, and as we passed through the tall grain, it seemed to murmur and whisper on all sides of us. In certain months in Alberta daylight stays till nearly eleven o'clock at night and a great moon hangs above the waving, golden grain, seeming like an immense artificial balloon, orang colored, as if i

income

well

its interior was all fire. The sky would be as still and clear blue as a summer sea. A stillness pervaded over all—the brooding hush of the ended day.

The country seemed to me like a vast cathedral stillled to silent

prayer. Came the great harvest. Men, two and two, following the binder binders, going down the fields with their wings whirling around. The rising and bending stockers, stacking the sheaves together. It was like a vast canvas— a masterpiece that no human hand could ever hope to copy.

The harvest meant incessant labor not merely on the land but in the house. It took me some time to acquire the "grain sense"—the feeling that no matter what, the grain ~~comes~~ ^{was} first of all. It was a living, vital, ~~one~~ thing that must be garnered before the encroaching hand of the fall frost ~~one~~ ^{was} ~~was~~ ~~in the night to brighten.~~

a man

The men had colossal appetites. I've seen ~~men~~ eat eight eggs, bacon, porridge, potatoes, rolls and coffee for breakfast. And he was no exception. The cook made a pie ~~apple~~ piece for the men at harvest time.

Its all very well for food specialists to insist we eat too much. I'd like to put one of those specialists on a plow or set him to stocking in an Alberta harvest field. I'll wager he'd eat like a horse when he came to table. To use an expression of the ranching country, the men "packed down" their food. They would say: "Well that'll stay with me till next time". They ate food that "stuck". They were like growing boys, always hungry and never full.

In the following spring our herd of a hundred Hereford heifers presented us with a hundred Hereford calves, the prettiest little things imaginable. We were ^{purebred} Hereford breeders by the way. Our great Duroc cows—all pedigreed critters and weighing some of them all of 700 lbs. presented us with litters of from thirteen to eighteen each. Pigs is pigs! Ours bore Royal names. There were so many of them ~~several hundred~~ and each was a prime pig that we named them thus: Duke of York #1, Duke of York #2, #3 and so forth. Then Duchess of York #2, 2, 5. Up to twenty

We put a competent foreman in charge of the grain ranch, and took up our residence at Bow View.

On one side of the ranch, down three hundred feet of canyon and cliff, like a long sinuous moving ribbon, the Ghost River flowed, bearing on its breast in the fall the hundreds of logs of the Eau Claire Lumber Camp. On another side, moving along with a stately grace, one of the loveliest rivers in the world, the Blue Bow River flowed down from the hills. Wherever we looked were sunlit hills, and beyond them hills higher and yet higher, and beyond those higher hills, the jagged, marvelous outline of the snow crowned Rockies, silhouetted against a sky whose iridescent colors were like a sea of opal and mother of pearl. This was my home.

I spent a great part of my time in the saddle and so did my children. They could ride like "little devils", to use an expression of one of the cowpunchers. I had five saddle horses of my own, Daisy, Lady Bug, Ethel, Silver Heels and Viper. Daisy was thoroughbred; Ladybug ~~was a Percheron~~ was the foal of a Percheron mare and a racing sire. Silver Heels was an Indian bronco and Viper was a demon. He threw me more times than I like to record. Ethel was a gentle, lovely creature — the kind of animal my husband liked me to ride — safe, surefooted. ~~and willing~~ I had named her after Ethel Kelley, author of "Wings", one of my New York friends.

Came no echoes of the hurrying dance life of the dead years? Did nothing stir within, luring and calling me back? How may one explain this thing? Even when galloping over the hills and across the wide spreading pastures and into woods where the long searchlights of the sun pierce through to the ~~marvelous~~ flowering carpet of every conceivable color; even when picnicing and holidaying with friends — neighboring ranchers, or people from Calgary — no matter where I was, and nearly all of the time, during that first year, ~~New York was always back there~~

at least, something beat like an aching pulse away back in my mind and deep in my heart. Letters from New York thrilled me to the bone. ~~I could have hugged a stranger from out my old~~
~~freedom~~
world. And then my work—my writing!

When I first came to Alberta I ~~brought~~ with me a little trunk in which all of my manuscripts were kept. By and by I used to call it my morgue. For five years I never opened it. For five years I never wrote a line. ~~I was living~~ I was living a love story, you see—not writing one! But there came to me gradually a comprehension of the fact that after all ~~Love~~
~~is~~
~~joy~~
~~it does not make life wholly joyful.~~ ~~There~~
~~the hungry soul craves~~
~~more love.~~

The summer and the long lovely fall passed away. The children were sent away to boarding schools. I was alone on the ranch, with a housekeeper most of the time. Our men were riding the range on the Fall round up. My husband was out with them. Sometimes they would be gone three and four days at the time. The range was an immense one, as I have mentioned, and we were riding with two other outfits. It takes considerable time to gather in several thousand head of cattle and horse.

Cold weather set in soon after the roundup and the dispersal of the herd in ~~isolated~~ fields. The breeding stock ~~mix~~ and pure breeds had been dispatched to the prairie ranch. My husband went down to the ~~peasants~~ ~~from~~
~~to be there upon their arrival.~~ I did not accompany him, because the weather was so cold, and he thought the long trip was too hard for a woman. So there I was, alone with a Swedish woman of the peasant type, when the first snowstorm came out of the north. I awoke to a sudden piercing realization of what I had done in cutting myself off from all my old friends and associates and isolating myself on an Alberta ranch. Followed days and days—No! weeks—three, during which I never left the house once. We were enclosed in a vast storm, a storm that never ceased, that shut us off from all the rest

of the world. I looked from my window and I saw nothing but snow, snow, snow! A world of snow — unending snow. Mounds and hillocks and unending sweep^s of snow. Great, towering hills, white as the dead, all shrouded like the dead, and falling, falling ceaselessly the thick, endless snow!

Even my cook, stolid daughter of Scandinavia sat in the kitchen rocking herself and moaning something in her native tongue. When I asked her what she was saying she replied: "Tis the end of the world!" Anna was homesick, and so was I. I was worse than homesick. I was starving for human companionship? Once I said that ~~irr~~ people with resources in themselves needed no other company than their own. That was flippant sophistry.

Utterly futile under the test.

Write? I went up to my little trunk, but I began to cry before I even opened the lid. What could I write? Little fairy-like, delicate romances of Japan?

I went up and down the stairs, in and out the living room, the dining room, the office, the kitchen —everywhere. I piled great logs on the fire. I ~~play~~^{mixed} stuck the Moonlight Sonata into the piano player and played it half through. I changed it to jazz. No go. I tried to read, but could'nt concentrate. There were 2500 books on the shelves around that great living room and the floor was bright with Navaho rugs. Oh, I did'nt lack any comfort as far as that goes, but I was lonely, terribly, oh! wildly lonely!

of a certain famous playwright with whom I had collaborated and how I always had a secret chuckle to myself because he didn't know I knew he had taken his shoes off under the table. I suppose he had corns, God bless him! I thought of the days, when a raw ignorant girl I had first come to New York and Ellery Sedgwick had taken the first of my stories; of the kind things, the lovely things that William Dean Howells said about me when my first book was published, and ~~ixthought~~ over and over again my mind would come back to — Jean Webster! She had been my friend for most of those years in New York — and such a friend! I thought of Jean's delicate, lovely, radiant personality and the effect it had upon my whole life. I thought of funny experiences we had had together; of irresistible stories she would tell in her inimitable way; of beautiful things she had done. The convicts she ^{ex-burglar} had befriended. Of the ~~man~~ with the grip in his hand whom she left waiting awhile for her with the light injunction to "Help yourself — but most of our silver is plated"! Of the Italian butler who in his evening clothes looked so fine that when a caller came and shpok hands with him as he entered, the ~~man~~ went back to the kitchen and throwing up his hands cried: "These Americans! They shake hands with the butler!" Of the day when I rode up and down the Subway holding a copy of Jean Webster's "Much Ado about Peter" conspicuously before me, my nose buried in it, and audibly chuckling, much to the interest and amusement of fellow passengers. I was a Subway "Ad" that day for Jean's book, and she responded by dropping wrappers of my next book in various prominent places on the L.

All these things came flooding back to my mind in the days in which I was shut in in that vast Alberta storm. I was a woman with a past—but such a past! It was crowded, hustling with moving, running, flying figures. But now I was alone, like an exile in Siberia.

~~for me~~

~~in Alberta~~ That was my first winter in Alberta. There were to be six more winters. Our money was tied up in cattle and land. We could'nt "pull up stakes" and quit, even if my husband would have been willing to do so.

He was not. He loved the "game". ~~He was going to give up!~~

Don't think that I was altogether unhappy. Far from it. Time heals all our wounds. Time acclimates us to any condition and environment. There came a time, indeed when I even assured myself that I loved the life. It was fine, big! We were foothill ranchers, lords of a domain of thousands of acres. We gave employment to many men and those men were our friends.

I came to know ~~them~~ all the ranchers and cowpunchers in our part of the country, "our part" embracing an area that ran to a couple of hundred miles. Distances meant nothing to us. We all had automobiles and horses, and we were back and forth to each others places. The Old-Timers were a never failing source of delight to me. I loved them. Most of the people in our part of the world had the spirit of adventurers. They had come from the four corners of the earth. Americans had drifted in from every State in the union. There was one part pf the country called Yankee Valley, and everyone there was from the U.S.A. The English were good sports and the best of ranchers. We had a duke's son riding the range for us. A peer's grandson kept a little road house, where we had Friday dances. Another duke's grandson had a polo and dude ranch adjoining ours? Two Italian princes had a great horse ranch and they came to call on us in overalls.

I knew most of the Indians well enough to call them by name. There were ~~about~~ about 600 of them on the Indian Reserve that was on one side of our ranch. When one gave a job to an Indian, he moved on to the place the next day with all of his relatives and connections from far and near, besides his numerous horses and dogs. We would be awakened the following morning

by the clang of Indian horse bells. We would find what looked like a whole tribe encamped all around us — an Indian tent city going up over night. Usually my husband would have them removed to some more remote part of the ranch. I would ride over every day, with sweetmeats and cakes and ^{sweet} things Indians love and visit the squaws and little rosy cheeked papooses. I made a all sorts of things for those papooses. Once an Indian rode over to the house and asked me to come and see his daughter. Her baby had died. Her husband had gone to the Cochrane races, and she was wailing in her tent. The baby had been buried over night. ~~sojourned~~ I made a big batch of brown sugar and nut candy. ~~sojourned~~ I jumped on horse and was soon over to the Indian camp. I left the little squaw waving to me, with a smile coming through her tears and her fat cheeks full of candy. A few days later the Sheriff's wife, daughter of one of the old-timer ranchers said to me:

"Mustn't do that Mrs. Reeve. You'll have a dead Indian baby every day on your hands if you do".

I acquired quite a reputation if you please as a Doctor. Just because I took the sting out of a scalded arm with some baking soda and lard. After that one Indian after another would come to "Missis Boss" for treatment for this or that ill. One boy lay out on our verandah all night waiting for me to come down. He had a bad case of blood poisoning in a leg that he had caught in a barbed wire fence. He had the most blind trust in my ability to heal it, and would not listen to my urgings to go to the Agency doctor. I had to use ^{to} ~~stratagem~~ in fact to get him there. Indians love an automobile ride. I managed to get my patient aboard and soon had him over on the Reserve. Once in the hands of the Indian agent there was no escape for him, and although I knew he would receive proper treatment I felt like a criminal when I saw poor Dan's eyes and realized he looked upon me as one who had betrayed his trust. He was terribly afraid that the doctor would cut his leg off and he said; "Missis Boss put medicine on".

There was one season of the year I dreaded—dehorning and branding time. I always shuddered every time I went by the Squeezegate and I used to shut myself up in my room and stuff cotton into my ears so I wouldn't hear the loud bellowing and bawling of the tortured animals.

The round up was a beautiful sight, with the cattle pouring down the hills and across the meadows from every direction—long armies of them, trailing along with the riders, in their picturesque chaps and hide shirts and flowing ties and cowboy hats, riding before, behind and flanking either side

One branding time I am never likely to forget. There were 2500 head in the corrals. All night long the mothers of the calves that were being weaned had kept up an incessant bawling, answered by their young in adjoining corrals. The calves besides being weaned were to be branded, and a load of yearling stuff that had come up from the stock yards were to be not only ^{re}branded but dehorned. They were big stuff—all almost full grown. In some way or another one of the corrals gave before the mad stampede of some of the penned cattle. They burst through and with their bleeding heads shaking from side to side, they swept down upon the house. I was in the living room at the time. The first I knew that something unusual had happened was when there was a great thump against the outside wall of the house. I heard the loud shouting of the riders, tearing down in pursuit of the "doegies", as they call the cattle.

I looked out of the window and it seemed to me as if the house were surrounded by cattle. They were trampling over my flower beds and crashing against the walls. Some of them had actually come up on the verandahs and at least one window was smashed.

Of course, the fugitives were soon driven back, but when at last I dared to venture out I saw a sight that shocked and nauseated me. All one side of the house—it was painted white, with green roof and gables—was splashed thick with blood! I sat down on the ground weakly and I found

myself saying:

"I'm not cut out for cowboy life. I have'nt the (guts) to stand it".

Those are ranch expressions. I had by this time learned the lingo of the country. I did'nt "bat an eyelash" in these days at the singular conversation that went on daily at my table. Although by now we had a cook ear for the men and a competent Chinese cook, there were always stockmen ranchers and special visitors at the ranch. They were a mixed "bunch", socially perhaps as far apart as the antipodes but on a ranch as close together as brothers. They were kindred spirits and cattle was the bond between them. They called a spade a spade—or to be more exact a stud was a stud ~~xxxx~~ and a bull was a bull. They had no fancy words such as "Gentleman cow" or Mr. Horse with which to designate their product, nor did their speech vary much even in the presence of a lady. I even became accustomed to "cusses" and gradually began to develop a vocabulary of my own. This, by the way, put a full stop to my husband's own weakness in that direction and for a time ~~in fact,~~ cussing was banned on the ranch. There was one old fellow—an Irishman who had the weirdest and most extraordinary vocabulary of cusses, and when the word went forth that there was to be no more cussing at all events near the ranchouse, he would catch himself midway, look at me sidewise, shift his tobacco about in his cheek and say:

"~~Be-garnish-~~. Hell's Teeth! I did'nt mean to cuss before a lady in that G—D — to hell way!"

Besides the cattlemen and cowmen we had numerous other visitors. Our ranch became a favorite place for Calgary folk to ~~know~~ to visiting celebrities, and distinguished men and women from the Mother country.

I'd get a telephone call saying:

"We're running out with Lord So and So. Wants to see what real ranch life is like. Tired of the hotels &c. Would it be too much trouble to put on a little stampede or rodeo for him and his party?"

When the large party of English editors and publishers ~~went through a few~~ headed by Lord Burnham went through a few years ago, I am sure at least fifteen car loads rode into our ranch. The word must have gone around that we had beer (not the two percent) in our ice house. Someone had sent up a couple of cases a few days before — a fine present, which our English visitors consumed. Lady Newnes, wife of Sir Franklyn Newnes, publisher of several London journals, ~~said~~ told me that her visit at Morley was the pleasantest part of her Canadian tour. She admired my Indian riding gauntlets so much — they were made for me by one of our squaws and were heavily beaded ^{1/2} — that I took them off and gave them to her. As a place to visit, in fact, the Canadian Rockies cannot, of course, be beaten. No wonder visitors from England come trailing in larger numbers every year. I had a letter quite recently from Mrs. Neville Chamberlain, wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer (son of Joseph Chamberlain) who wrote: That of all the places over the world where they had visited none had appealed to her so as "that stretch of country on the blue Bow River, where is your lovely home!"

So, you see, in many ways my life had its compensating side. Of course, visitors only saw the ranch life from its sunny side. They knew nothing of the long, lonely, winter days, or of the strenuous work, the constant strain of having strangers always in your house. There were times when I simply longed for a small, wee place, all by myself, where I could sit down at a little table with no one but myself and husband there.

But it was not to be. More and more the duties of the ranch fell upon my shoulders. Without a pinch of executive ability, I found myself in charge of a considerable menage. Besides that I wanted to be my husband's companion and go with him on the numerous trips he made to cattle fairs and sales &c. Once I sat with him in a colossal rotunda at a big Bull sale. I was much interested. Men of all types sat on the benches as at a circus. Cattle experts, agriculturists, students, university men —

besides the farmers and ranchers —there they sat, their absorbed gaze bent upon the magnificent brutes that one by one were lead to the little platform. A graduate of Glasgow university sitting next to me squinted his eyes and made a telescope of his hand to gaze at a great Hereford bull, and literally sighed with joy, because it was such a perfect specimen of its race. The auctioneer was a study. He would literally jump up and down when some especially fine specimen was lead into the ring and he would scream:

"Oh boy! What have we here! What have we here? Gentlemen, gentlemen, look at this beautiful animal! The most perfect specimen of the Hereford race my eyes have ever looked upon. The greatest calf thrower in the country, gentlemen! Oh my God! what an animal!"

I sat and listened to all this. By my side sat my formerly N.Y. husband and he had completely forgotten ~~the moment~~^{my existence}. By the way we bought the champion of that sale. I had an amusing experience a few months later with a visitor from New York, whom I was driving over the ranch. He was a writer of "Canadian" plays and with a couple of other authors, he had done me the honor of calling upon me while en route to Banff.

I was driving a pair of huge geldings, with my party clinging to their seats in the democrat. When we came down almost perpendicular hills, I know very well those men's hearts were in their throats. They didn't know whether they could trust me or not. However, the incident I want to relate here didn't take place on the hill. We were driving through a road that went along the side of the bull pasture.. One of our bulls came along the fence line. Said the man who wrote plays of "the great outdoors". "Tell me, Mrs. Reeve, how much are one of those bulls worth?" Before I could reply he added: "\$50. ? \$100? Something like that?" I said : "You are a nice one to write of ranch life. The bull you are looking at cost \$7000. Its sire brought \$30,000. when he

took the championship at a great U.S. fair. Even if you killed an animal of that size and used him merely for beef, he'd be worth more per pound than the \$50. you suggest".

When I speak of visitors, of course, I am not referring to the winter. Then we had no guests. But during the fishing and game season we always had house guests, and many uninvited guests camping down by the river, after the trout and the small game—partridge, prairie chicken, pheasant and mallard duck on the ponds. I have had young does spring directly in front of my horse, and I've seen wonderful antlers gleaming through the trees. But I never told at the ranchhouse about this, because I didn't want the lovely things killed on our place. The Indians brought us all kinds of venison, moose, wild sheep, goat &c. and somehow ~~they~~ I liked to pretend that the wild stuff in our own woods had come down there for sanctuary. Of course, the men ~~saw~~ them themselves, but anyway I wasn't going to contribute to the knowledge of their presence.

I would not leave the impression that winters in Alberta are necessarily all cold and that snowstorms are the general rule. The climate is unusual, inasmuch as often in a spell of cold that sent the thermometer down to 30 to even 45 degrees below zero, suddenly out of the mountains would come a great wind. They called it a "Chinook", and its origin was said to be my from the Japanese current. This wind would be almost hot. Inside of a few hours, we would witness the miracle of all the snows evaporated, streams running, weather as balmy as a June day, and sometimes this weather would last for weeks.

However, there came the inevitable day when I made up my mind that I needed a change. I was "fed up" on ranch life. I liked people better than cattle. I had an inner feeling that I was spoiled for life again in a big city, but at least I told myself I wanted to get a taste of it again. No doubt, as all my neighbors insisted, I would be going back

~~Timaykenned~~ There was a common saying that once Alberta got into your blood you never wholly could be weaned from it. You might go away, but you would always come back. The place was like a magnet. It would pull you back. One heard all sorts of terms applied to it: "Vampire land!" "God's land!" "Man's Land!" and so forth. I think it was like the country in Service's Yukon, which made or broke a man—a place where only the strong could survive. A place that strafed one almost to death but which gave eventually the greatest of rewards.

Some poet once wrote: #Unless we carry the beautiful with us we will find it not" ! One did not need to carry beauty with him to see it out there. I realize that; but even beauty does not wholly satisfy the cravings of a hungry soul. I think I was hungry all the time. It was 'nt that I wanted so much to return to New York and my friends —but ~~mix~~ deep in me was the overpowering urge to —write! I realized that when I went down to Calgary, shut myself in a room for two weeks, and it seemed as if I had turned on a mental faucet. Everything wanted to come tumbling out of me at once! I had so much to write—so much to tell—the words ran over each other—they jostled for room and space.

And now I am back in New York! The roar of the city resounds in my ears. My life is in jeopardy every time I go out on the streets. Like Rip Van Winkle I feel as if I had come up out of a long sleep and all the world had changed for me. But time wings along. Time acclimates us to all things, as I have said. ~~mixtus~~ Thousands of miles away from me now the magnet of the ranch may be turning toward me. Will I go back? I do not know.