

Seven Girls who Own and Operate

a 725 Acre Ranch

COLORADO is fast making a strenuous bid for what might be called the heavyweight championship of the prodigy class. If a year ago anybody asked a Colorado man, and particularly one from Gunnison county, if his state and shire possessed anything remarkable enough to entitle them to consideration from the world at large, the instant reply would be: "Why, my boy, don't you know that Gunnison county, state of Colorado, is the one place in the universe where we do raise anything remarkable? Don't you know that out there we raise more hundredweights of potatoes to the acre, more 1,500 pound steers to the square mile, and more bad cow punchers to the square foot than all the rest of this mundane sphere combined? Anything remarkable about Gunnison county, Colo.? Well, you hear me talking!"

The conceit of Colorado was always strong and ready to outcrop, for the people who dwell there know they have a good country, and they also know if the grass on the range is good they can independently laugh the rest of the world to scorn. And now, for a reason, their good opinion of their state has increased. Now if you wander out into the vicinages of the Gunnison ranges and happen to remark of the prodigal things of the world that you have happened to see in your wanderings, the Gunnison man will smile at you with the smile of one who is conscious of his immeasurable superiority in the question under discussion. He will hook up a pair of bronches to a light, springy buckboard and will drive you over a road of many miles, through a country of broad, pleasant ranches, wide ranges, immense herds of blue blooded Durham and Herefords, substantial ranch houses, and big corrals, through a valley of many miles to a ranch up near the headwaters of Ohio creek. It is a big combination cow and hay ranch, 725 acres in extent.

Have Eastern Girls Beaten.

"You can sit and tell me all day about the eastern girl who at 8 can play Mendelssohn on the piano," says the Colorado man; "you can warble to me for a week about the Ohio girls who worked as street car conductors, but here is something that I'm going to show you that's got all these things beaten a mile. Look."

You look. The first thing you see is a large eight rail horse corral full of horses ranging from the old, broken down cow pony to the wild colt just in from the range. There is some kind of a commotion going on in the corral, and you take a reserved seat on the fence rails and watch, after the manner of the country. An 18 year old girl with a gorgeous pompadour of golden hair has roped a wild horse in the corral and is warping him up to the smothering post, foot by foot, with the skill and nonchalance of the old, hardened men "twisters." She is attired in the regulation chaps and sombrero of the broncho twister, but you look at the white shirt waist and the pompadour of gold and wonder.

"That's Tilly," says your guide. "Come on." He leads around to the other side of the corral. "Yah," he cries. "Look at her sit right in the middle of him, eh? Can't she sure ride him, though? Good girl, Pearl!" he cries encouragingly to the girl who is sitting calmly in the saddle while a frantic young broncho tries by all manners of tricks that are given to vicious bronchos to throw her up against the clouds or grind her under him as he throws himself. Presently the exhibition slackens, the broncho grows tired, and it suddenly becomes evident that the girl "buster" is about 19 years old, that she has a glorious wealth of golden hair, and that she is beautiful. "Number two," says the guide. "This way, please." There is another girl, in overalls splitting wood near the ranch house. Inside the house there is still another attending to the womanly duties of housekeeping. Both are young and good looking.

Out in the hayfield, a half mile from the house, there is found a girl, wonderfully like those before seen, seated on a horse rake. A mower runs in another part of the field. The driver is a girl. A stacker is building a pile of alfalfa thirty feet high near by, and two more girls are occupied in its operation.

"But where are the men of the ranch and the old folks?" blurt out the astonished visitor.

"These are them," says the Colorado man, his enthusiasm running riot with his grammar. "You've seen the entire personnel of this ranch, from the lowest hayforker to the boss man. This is our prize feature before the world today. These eight girls own—at least, nearly own—and run this ranch all alone."

And this is why Colorado has increased its self-estimation. The eight girls are all sisters, and their name is Vidal. Their ages range from 15 to 25.

They came into sole and undivided possession of the big ranch at the death of their father, three years ago. Vidal père was a pioneer among the ranchers of the Gunnison valley. He acquired the ranch by homestead and purchase, but when he died he left his affairs in bad shape and his land heavily mortgaged. The girls were left orphans at his death, their mother having died some time before. Confronted with the problem of saving the old home from the grasp of the man who held the mortgage, their sorrow of bereavement was greatly added to.

Undertake to Raise Mortgage.

But they were made of the stuff that Colorado is justified in being proud to have in some of its fair citizens. The ranch

was there, the stock was on the range to be taken care of, the hay crop must be gotten in, the baling must be done. They were unable to hire the help to have it done. So they turned in, all eight of them, and did it themselves. They were scattered far when this resolve was made. Four of them were in Denver, one was visiting in Kansas, the three others were at school in Gunnison. But they all came back to the old ranch at the call of the oldest sister and went to work.

Being all born and bred on a ranch, they knew fully what ranch work meant. They knew it was no place for dainty skirts, low slippers, or long sleeved dresses. There is one article of apparel that is highly essential to the ranch worker's intelligent prosecution of his duties. It is a divided garment, so it occurred that a tailor in Gunnison suddenly was in receipt of an order for eight pairs of overalls to be delivered at the Vidal ranch. This was three years ago. Since that time, each working day in the busy season on the ranch, the eight girls have sallied forth from the ranch house arrayed in the attire that conventionality has emphatically proscribed as being man's exclusive property. For three years they have run the ranch entirely without assistance. They have punched cattle, broken bronchos, cut, stacked, and baled hay, and done all the work that is incident to a ranch such as theirs.

Another Year Will Lift Debt.

So well have they prospered and so fortunate have they been with their crops that the mortgage on the ranch is now nearly cleared; and another year, if the alfalfa grows long and strong and the herd gets fat, will see the debt, which the plucky young girls took it upon themselves to pay, entirely settled. To this end the girls are bending all their efforts. In the winter, when there is little work to be done on the ranch, Tilly, Josie, Pearl, and Sophia find employment in Denver, returning to the work of the ranch in the spring as soon as the occasion demands. Their savings from their earnings all go into the common fund of the family to help raise the mortgage.

With the attention which the girls' pluck and endeavor has attracted have come many whisperings of romances

More than One Interrupted Romance.

The eligible young men of Gunnison valley heard this edict with sorrow. Here were eight young women of whom six, at least, were of the ages when it is exactly proper to go a-wooing them. And they were all beautiful, as well. Each Sunday night there were tied at the hitch rail of the Vidal ranch from six to eight horses. There were offers of marriage galore. More than one rich young rancher offered gladly to assume the debt of the ranch if only the particular one of the sisters with whom he was smitten would say "Yes." But the answer that each of the girls gave to her suitor was always the same: "Wait; we will pay it off ourselves."

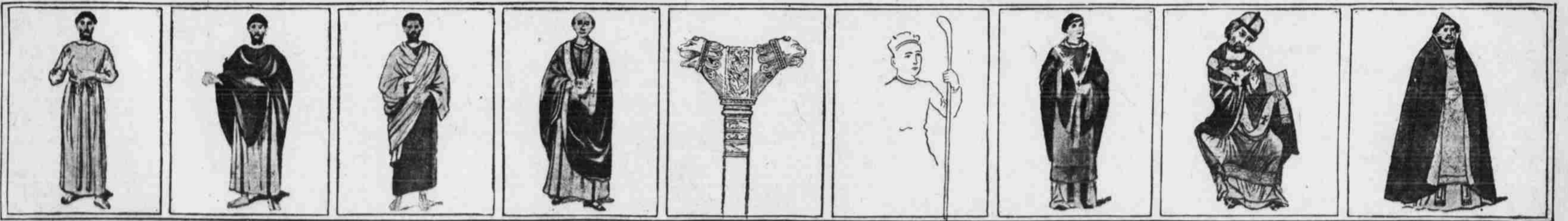
And they are going to do it, too, and it is for these things

that Colorado is proud of them. Another year, provided fortune is with them, the Vidal ranch will be their free property. What will be the result when the girls have fulfilled their self-assumed obligation and are free to do as they please is what is causing much comment in the country adjacent. If the word of the people of Gunnison valley is to be taken for much, things are going to happen when this event

comes to pass. It is alleged that there are two romances mixed in the ranch debt the culmination of which rests upon the day that the last dollar of the mortgage is paid. Then, says Gunnison, will not only be a day of rejoicing for the eight brave girls, but also for several young men whose ranches lie immediately adjacent to the one at the headwaters of Ohio creek.

The Misses Vidal who operate a mammoth ranch
Josie, Annetta, Tilly, Pearl, Sophia, Bertha and Etienne

Evolution of the Magnificent Regalia of the Popes.



As It Was in the First Century. The Casula. Pope in the Fourth Century. In the Sixth Century. Stave—Fourth Century. Shepherd's Crook, Fourth Century. In the Time of Charlemagne he Great. In the Eleventh Century. Pope with His Mantle.

THE apparel of the Jewish priests was the forerunner of the robes of the great Roman pontiffs, the latter being indeed the same with only such alterations as time and changes in liturgy prompted.

The casula, the holiest of all the ecclesiastical vestments, shaped something like a bell, is an olden time Gallic relic which from time immemorial had played a part in the attire, particularly of the lower ranks of Gallic society, during bad weather. How-

ever, in the second century it was worn by Roman matrons and senators, and tradition has it that the apostle Peter wore such a garment at the time of his death, which was afterward preserved as a relic. This latter fact served as its introduction to the wardrobes of the priesthood.

The dalmatica, or stole, with wide flowing sleeves, was worn by Pope Sylvester I, and was termed a Levitical robe, and was also worn by the lower clergy.

The pallium, a short little mantle which was wound spirally round the body, back, and shoulders, was originally

given by the emperor to the pope as a garment of honor to the bishops. It was of the finest linen or finest white wool, adorned with gold and purple stitchings, and survives today in the emblems conferred on patriarchs, primates, and archbishops as a sign they share in the plenitude of the episcopal office.

The shepherd's crook was first carried in the fourth century, although it did not at that time assume a fixed form and underwent many changes.

Headgear was not particularly ornate at the first and the

most that the clergy aspired to was a hood. This, however, gradually took on more and more decorative effects until at last in the twelfth century the great bishops and archbishops appeared in ornamental headwear much after the fashion of the contemporary princes of the world. And soon after came the great, richly bedecked mantles with the gorgeous hoods falling from shoulder down the back, mantles which appeared in a variety of forms and fashions and which survive to the present time in some of their modifications.

It was only in the twelfth century that the pope had

begun to assume the state and brilliance of his later career. When Pope Gregory became head of the church he assumed that the importance of his post entitled him to the use of the regal tiara and the high papal hat dates from his reign. This was the beginning of the various accretions to the papal splendor of garb, which was held as symbolical of his earthly and heavenly powers and rank. Today the same theory holds and his robes and all his vestments are chosen in part to represent temporal might, the throne, and in part to represent divine might, the altar.



Pope of the Twelfth Century. With a Shepherd's Crook, Twelfth Century. With the Ancient Hat, Twelfth Century. Papal Hat of the Twelfth Century. Pope with Modern Hat, Twelfth Century. Simple Crown, Thirteenth Century. Pope with Double Crown. The Triple Crown. With the Most Modern Style of Shepherd's Crook.