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Cattle sales are mighty quiet events in San Angelo. Loud and boisterous conduct has been replaced by islands of men isolated in muted conversations.

Acute cases of cow fever have changed to a chill factor that would be noticeable on an Artic expedition. Hombres who formerly were climbing the rails for the cow action are sitting in solitary parts of the ring, practicing what is apparently some sort of far eastern meditation. I feat it is the kind that Yogis use to drive away poverty.

Anti-acid pills are the most popular item in the auction restaurant. Roll-Aids and Tums meet a fast turnover. Aspirin has been abandoned. Withdrawal pains form cow fever are too severe for lightweight headache powders.

The general appearance of the herders is good. Winter has been mild in the Shortgrass Country. Other than the ones that slipped their hair in the fall, the gloss from the boom still remains.

Insurance peddlers and pickup salesmen are avoiding the scene. In the plush times, agents and brokers kept hearty company with the cow people. Realtors do continue to come around on sales days. They are so lonely for a prospective customer that they aren't choosy of the company they keep.

Real estate men, have been hard hit, too. Just to get someone to listen to the spiel if impossible. Last week, for example, I was told of a reputation herd of young Hereford cows that could be bought for a mere tune of their worth. Later on, I heard of a tax dodge that would solve man's battle against the I.R.S. for the next six generations. It turned out that both stories had originated from the same real estate office. Those boys want an ear! They don't care how far they have to go to reach it.

Out on the yards, you are apt to hear or see nearly anything. Two traders were hanging over the rails, watching the alleys. One was telling the other that in his whole life he had never seen a sheepman go as broke as a cowman could.

All the time his partner was talking, the other was charting the takeoffs and landings of a swarm of blackbirds around a water trough. As an answer, he said, "You know, with the number twos taken off, that'd make a right fancy set of birds."

Good or bad, cow sales have a strong attraction over us all. Things are sounding better. Also, so much of it is behind.

I like sitting around those boys out there. One of these days, the change will com.e. Then everyone will be our friends again.