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Feeder cattle have strengthened at the special calf sales in San Angelo. Steers on the long end of the five weights give reason for rejoicing. I saw several lots of heifers pass the 30 cent mark. The wound is unhealed, but it does give hope of recovery.

Meanwhile, herders are still broken up in small bunches. Little brothers of advanced age hover next to their big brothers. Husbands and wives continue to stay close together; father and son combinations are common pairs.

The isolation has reached quarantine proportions in my case. Commission men who did business with my grandfather have forgotten my name. Traders who at big males at the ranch a few years back suffer from the same amnesia. I have no trouble at all finding a vacant seat to smoke and prop up my heels.

At first the lost fellowship bothered me. Solitude, however, grows within a man and becomes a pleasure. Think how many hombres who have tried the wheels of Vegas, later to return to the comforts of the game of solitaire.

Cry-easys grow mighty soggy watching a couple of saddle horses standing so they can share the fly fighting with dual tail action. Blubbery sentimentalists break down at pictures of mother monkeys picking fleas, from their babies.

Companionship of man or beast if misunderstood. I figure that the old ponies stay together to be sure that they break even for the feed trough. As to the mother monkey's devotion, I am certain that she bites the fleas to keep them off her own hide.

Hermits ask to be left alone. It's the busybody nature of society that cries that old man so-and-so should be put somewhere so he won't expire in peace.

Go on and tell me where you catch the bad colds in the wintertime. Kids packed in a classroom trade viruses on counts of ten. Hombres living out in the line camps and under canvas are perfect prospects for an insurance company. Pediatricians look forward to the opening of school with as much anticipation as the janitors do the closing date.

The big business mistakes are made in looking for the human element. Long, disappointing hours are spent in the brush hunting wild cattle, but those hours won't compare to the regrets that can be caused by driving all the way to town to find an old boy to handle the cattle.

Archeologists wear themselves out trying to discover why the ancient two story dwellings in the Southwest were abandoned by primitive people. All they'd have to do to solve the mystery would be to interview the people now inhabiting multi-complex apartment houses.

I heard a director of a bank saying the other day how much his board liked to eat at a certain steak house in San Angelo. He said one thing they all liked was the garlic flavor that came from the grill. You don't have to be told about bankers or why people like garlic. I didn't ask about their attitude toward fried onions. I imagine you could find that out by interviewing their loan customers in private, or asking junior members of the staff that had pleaded for a raise in salary.

In the old days, kids wearing one set of underwared all winter didn't have to be cautioned against riding or speaking with strangers. The rankest outlaw gang in the southwest wouldn't have led one of those siblings off on a Shetland if he caught their downwind trail.

I don't mind the traders and the buyers going high hat. Unexpected comebacks happen every day. They don't know it, but we have a couple of old mares bred at the ranch. Even second place at the big futurities pays lots of money. Of course, not every old colt is a racehorse, but the fellow who found the golden goose egg was probably just hungry and not greedy at all.

Times will change for the better. Breath mints will come back into fashion. Our popularity will be restored by a turn in the market.