

The Cow Puncher

BY ROBERT J. C. STEAD.

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CHAPTER II.

The first flush of dawn was mellowing the eastern sky when the girl was awakened from uneasy sleep by sounds in the yard in front of the ranch house. She had spent most of the night by her father's side, and although he had at last prevailed upon her to seek some rest for herself, she had done so under protest and without understanding. Now, after the first dazed moment of returning consciousness, she was on her feet and through the door.

The stars were still shining brightly through the cold air. In the faint light she could distinguish a team and wagon, and men unloading. She approached, and, in a voice that sounded strangely distant in the vastness of the calm night, called, "Is that you, Dave?"

How dared he call her Reenie? A flush of resentment rose in her breast only to be submerged in the sudden remembrance that she had first called him Dave. That rarely gave him the right to address her as he had done. But with this thought came recognition of the curious and frankness that it was not by her word that he would attempt to justify his. Indeed, she was convinced that he would have called her Reenie anyway—just as she had called him Dave without protest or intention.

Then she remembered she was in the ranch country, in the foothills, where the conventions—the conventions she hated—had not yet become rooted, and where the souls of men and women stood bare in the clear light of frank acceptance of the fact. It would be idle—dangerous—to trifle with this boy by any attempt at concealment or deception. And what were conventions but a recognized formula of concealment and deception?

She could see his form now, as he led the horses toward the corral. How straight he was, and how bravely his feet stepped to the hard earth! The poise of his motion reached her through the darkness. She heard the harness jingle as the horses rubbed between the posts of the corral gate.

"He's a wonderful boy," said the doctor, of whose presence she had been unconscious. "Cat's eyes. Full gallop through the dark; side hills, mountain streams, up and down; break-neck, well, here we are." The doctor breathed deeply, as though this last fact were one of the greatest wonders. "Your brother tells me you have an injured man here; accident, stranger? Believe? Well, shall we go in?"

Brother? But why should she explain? Dave hadn't bothered. Why hadn't he? He had told about the stranger; why had he not told about both strangers? Why had he ignored her altogether? This time came another flush, but it was that womanly intuition which understands.

With a commonplace she led the doctor into the house and to the bedside of her father. She was struck by the change in attitude of the visiting physician when he learned that his patient was of his own profession. It was like the meeting of brothers in a secret order. There was an exchange of technical terms that might have served as password or sign in some fraternal order, and the setting of the limb was accompanied by a running fire of professional comment as effective upon the nerves of the sufferer as an opiate.

When the operation was completed the girl turned her attention to the kitchen, where she found Dave, sweating in vicarious suffering. He had helped to draw the limb into place, and it had been his first close contact with human pain. It was different from branding calves, and he had slipped out of the room as soon as possible. The morning sun was now pouring through the window, and the distinguished look on the boy's face touched her even more than the frankness of the words spoken in the darkness. She suddenly remembered that he had been up all night—for her. She would not deceive herself with the thought that it was for her father's sake Dave had gone to town, found a doctor, exposed a fresh team, and driven back along the littered foothill trails.

She recalled the doctor's terse description of that journey. No doubt Dave had had father's help alone, but as things were she had a deep conviction that he had done it for her. And it was with a greater effort than seemed reasonable that she laid her hand on his arm and said, "Thank you, Dave."

"What for?" he asked, and she could not doubt the genuineness of his question.

"Why for bringing the doctor, and all that? Diving all night on those awful roads. We fell off them in daytime. I am sure I can't." Father wouldn't be able to.

"Oh, chuck," he interrupted, with a manner which, on the previous afternoon, she would have called rudeness. "That's nothing. The chuck here was home some grub. The chuck here was pretty tame; guess you found that out last night." He looked about the room, and she knew that he was taking note of her house-keeping, but he made no remark on the subject.

"Well, let's get breakfast," she said, after a moment's pause, and for lack of other conversation. "You must be hungry."

Dave's purchases had been liberal. They included fresh meat and vegetables, canned goods, coffee, rice, and raisins. He laid the last three items on the table with a great dissembling of indifference, for he was immensely proud of them. They were unwrapped from the Elton bill of fare; he had bought them especially for her. From somewhere the knowledge had been borne in upon him that city people strenuously drink coffee for breakfast, and the rice and raisins were an inspiration quite his own. He would see what she could do with them. But she busied herself at the breakfast without a thought of the epoch-marking nature of these purchases.

"Do you milk?" she asked, presently.

"Milk what?" he demanded, pausing with stove-lid and lifter raised in his hand, in the half-completed act of putting wood on the fire.

"Dave!" she cried. "Put that lid down. Look at the smoke." A blue cloud was curling under the rafters.

"Yes," he said, with great composure. "It always does that in this country."

She shot a quick glance at him. Was he making fun of her? No; plainly not; he was just making fun with her; he had a vein of humor. And a little before she had found his face drawn in sympathy for her father. Perhaps for her. . . . He was not all on the surface.

He completed his operation at the stove and returned the lid to its place with no lack of deliberation. He was evidently waiting for her to speak again, but she worked on in silence.

"What did you say about milking?" he ventured at length.

"I asked you if you milked," she said, with an attempt at coyness. "And you answered, 'Milk what?' as though that were clever. And we need milk for breakfast."

"Well, I was serious enough," he said. "There isn't a cow within twenty miles."

"No cows? Why I thought this was the ranching country?"

"Sure thing. We sell beef and buy milk. Let me show you."

He approached a packing case on the wall, walking softly and extending his hands as though to touch it gently, and murmuring, "So boss, so boss," as he reached for the box. He removed a tin of condensed milk, which he set on the table. In his pocket he found a nail, and with a hammer quickly made two holes in the tin.

"Milk's finished," he announced.

At this juncture the doctor, who had been resting in the room with his patient, entered the kitchen. During the setting of the limb he had gradually become aware of the position of Irene in the household, but had that not been an unglance at the boy and girl as they now stood in the bright morning sunshine, he with his big, wiry frame, his brown face, his dark eyes, his black hair, his round ankles and smooth, with the pink shining through her fair skin and the light of youth dancing in her grey eyes and the light of day glancing on her brown hair, must have told him they had sprung from widely separated stock. For one perilous moment he believed through her fair skin and the light of youth dancing in her grey eyes and the light of day glancing on her brown hair, must have told him they had sprung from widely separated stock.

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This is no longer a job.

Stories of Famous People

Some good stories are told about General Birdwood. One day he was going through the trenches with his helmet in one hand, revealing his closely-cropped hair. One of his staff, noticing that a certain sentry did not salute as the corps commander passed, asked the reason, the man replying that he didn't know who it was.

The staff officer, walking away, heard the sentry say to himself, "How can I tell with his head like that? Why doesn't he wear feathers, as any other bird would?"

Birdwood once told a friend that while he was in the trenches a sentry shouted to him, "Duck your blinking head, Birdie."

"Great Scott!" said the friend, "that was a 'let off,' and what did you do?"

"I ducked my blinking head!" the General replied.

It is said that Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, finds that device a nuisance, and will not have one in his own house!

In confirmation, a lady has told the story of how she met him at a reception given in his honor at Washington.

When she was introduced to the inventor some imp of mischief, she relates, made her say to him, "Glad to meet you, but sometimes I wish you had never been born."

For an instant her heart stood still as she realized what she had said and as she noted the wave of displeasure that passed across the face of her hostess.

She could hear people about her expressing their astonishment with a quick, gasping intake of their breath. But after a second's hesitation—for he was himself taken back by the unexpected remark—Dr. Bell answered with a merry twinkle in his eye.

"I wish," said the old man, at length, "I could welcome you, m'sure. 'Sh' sucher me!" He made his uncertainty to the water bench, took a great drink, and set about washing his face and hands, while the breakfast proceeded in silence. As his preparations neared completion Irene set a place at the table.

"Won't you sit down here, Mr. Elton?" she said. There had been no introductions. Dave ate on in silence.

"Thank you," said the old man, and there was something in his voice which may have been emotion, or may have been the huskiness of the heavy drinker's throat. The girl gave it the former explanation. Perhaps it was his unintended tribute to that touch of womanly attentiveness to which his old heart still held response. As he took the proffered chair she saw in this old man's shreds of dignity which the less refined eye of his son had not distinguished. To Dave, his father was an affliction to be borne; an un-fair load on a boy who had done nothing to deserve this punishment. The miseries associated with his parentage had gone far to make him sour and moody. Irene at first had thought him rude and gloomy; flashes of humor had modified that opinion, but she had not yet learned that his disposition was naturally a buoyant one, weighed down by an environment which had made it soggy and unresponsive. In years to come she was to know what unguessed depths of character were revealed when that stoic nature was cross-sectioned by the blade of a keen and defiant passion. This morning she foresaw nothing of those future revelations, but in the old man's first instinct detected qualities which perhaps were waiting only some touch of sympathetic understanding to flush forth even yet like that burst of sunset radiance which sometimes marks the close of a leaden day.

(To be continued.)

Planting Dahlia Tubers.

Many people do not understand that the tuber of the dahlia has no eyes and if detached from the stem cannot grow. I have known of several instances where these tubers were planted and watched anxiously for weeks and hopes kept up because they were always fresh and green when examined. They will keep all right but cannot grow for the eyes are in the old stalk just where the tuber joins it, and this heavy ridge at the base of the old stem should be divided among the several bulbs that are attached to it, and only those tubers having this piece of stem should be planted.

If the world be divided into land and water hemispheres, London is the centre of the land, New Zealand of the water.

Smoke OLD CHUM

The Tobacco of Quality
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Woman's Interests

The Farm Table in Spring.

"I just detest cooking at this time of year. It seems as though there is nothing good to eat and no appetizing way to serve anything."

Mrs. Leonard rang the dinner bell as she spoke and then went in to put the noon meal on the table.

Fried salt pork, boiled beans, boiled potatoes, mince pie and cucumber pickles doesn't really seem like an ideal spring menu, does it? And yet, how many farm housekeepers are repeating Mrs. Leonard's complaint! And how many keep right on serving similar meals until nearly midsummer!

Mrs. Leonard was a progressive woman and that afternoon she sat down and planned how she might serve better meals the rest of the season. Green vegetables, fresh fruit, and an appetizing relish were three things she wanted badly. Green vegetables and fresh fruit were out of the question that year except as she occasionally bought them in town, and as Mrs. Leonard was a real farmer she wanted to produce these things on her own farm. However, there were plenty of canned and preserved fruits in the cellar and they appeared in various forms at every meal from that day.

That afternoon she went to one of her neighbors and obtained a quantity of horseradish roots which were prepared for the table. Also a dozen or more roots were planted in the garden to grow for another year. Mr. Leonard built a smokehouse and a goodly quantity of the offending "salt pork" was soon converted into slabs of bacon. Milk and eggs appeared very often. One of their favorite desserts was junket, flavored variously, and served with halves of peaches or pears or perhaps a tablespoonful of strawberry jam and a fluff of whipped cream on each serving of junket.

That was two years ago. This spring the Leonard's have had parsnips and salsify since the ground thawed out enough to dig them. Russet apples buried all winter are furnishing fresh fruit and their own horseradish roots give an ideal spring relish to serve with the home-smoked ham and bacon. As soon as the parsnips and salsify grow "old" an asparagus bed will give them its first crop of a most delicious vegetable and before that is over radishes and lettuce will be plentiful and strawberries will furnish fresh fruit. By that time all the other good things of the summer garden will appear on the table. The Leonard's have worked out a system whereby they have fresh fruit and vegetables the year round.

The Flower Bed.

The woman who can spend but little time with her flower garden, but who yet must have blossoms, will find perennial plants much more satisfactory than annuals, for which seeds must be planted each spring.

With perennials once well started and given a little care in the fall, the new spring growth will be up often before the housekeeper realizes the snow is really gone. The expense of starting the garden at first is a little more than buying seeds, but when you consider that seeds must be procured every spring, the things balance nicely in the end.

A good nursery catalogue will tell you all about the perennials, but there are some which every garden needs. Of course, you want violets, which, by the way, may be potted after the first killing frost and brought into the house to blossom for Christmas. Lilies of the valley are also easily grown, and a favorite with everyone.

A list of the perennials just now most popular follows, for you must remember there are styles in skirt lengths.

Baby's breath, hardy pink foxglove, iris, English daisy, heliopsis, larkspur, coreopsis, carterbury bells, gaillardia, phlox, forget-me-nots, columbine, hollyhock, oriental poppies, and funkia. If you plant the seeds of these in July you will have fine plants that will bloom next summer.

New Ways To Clean Woodwork.

Housewives in our neighborhood are enthusiastic over the following method of cleaning varnished or waxed woodwork and floors: To one quart of lukewarm water add one tablespoonful of vinegar, and one of oil, olive oil or a vegetable oil. Of course, any quantity of water may be mixed, but these are the proportions. Wash the wood with a soft cloth, and rub dry immediately with cheesecloth. Clean only a small space at a time, and rub with the grain of the wood.

It is claimed that the vinegar removes the grease, while the oil gives the desired polish.

A decorator advises washing woodwork and floors with gasoline every spring. This cuts all the old dirt and polish which has accumulated through

Borrowed Gems.

Perpetual pushing and assurance will make a seeming impossibility give way.—Jeremy Collier

It was the saying of a great man that "if we could but trust our deserts we should find all slaves to come from princes and all princes from slaves"—Seneca

It is generally the man who doesn't know any better who does the things that can't be done. The fool doesn't know that it can't be done, so he goes ahead and does it.—Charles Austin Bates

Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could; some blunders and absurdities except in—forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day and you shall begin it well and serenely, and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense.—Emerson

I saw a delicate flower had grown up two feet high between the horse's path and the wheel-track. An inch more to the right or left had saved its fate, or an inch higher, and yet it lived to flourish as much as if it had a thousand acres of untrodden space around it, and never knew the danger it incurred. It did not borrow trouble, nor invite an evil fate by apprehending it.—Thoreau

The Day Has Come.

"When I was a little boy," the old man said to his men, at the end of an exhausted hour of drill, "I had a set of wooden soldiers. There was a little boy in the neighborhood, and of course I had been to Sunday-school one day, and listened to a stirring tale of the beauties of charity. I was softened enough to give them to him. Then I wanted them back, but my mother said, 'Don't cry, Bertie. Some day you will get your wooden soldiers back.' And, believe me, you mutton-headed, goose-brained, prehistoric set of certified rolling-pins, that day has come! Dismiss!"

Shows Above, Fine Below.

It may seem singular, but it is true that showers of rain occur without a single drop reaching the earth. This happens when the rain falls from a high cloud and meets on its downward journey a layer of very warm air. This warm air causes the rain to evaporate long before it has the chance of getting even into the lower levels of the atmosphere, say, as low down as ten thousand feet above the ground.

Sometimes these overhead showers are distinctly visible from below, as a sort of dark fringe to a still darker cloud. Often the fringe takes a twisted form, as though the cloud were moving forward and leaving the lower part of the shower behind.

In the same way, a snowstorm frequently occurs in the higher regions of the atmosphere without a single flake reaching ground level. The snow has melted, and the moisture has evaporated in mid-air.

These overhead snowstorms are not to be supposed as occurring only in the winter-time, for at a very great height above the earth it is always "winter." Hence, an overhead snowstorm may be seen, even in the height of summer, taking place five miles, or even less, above the earth.

The winter, during the winter, has observed snowstorms raging at only a few thousand feet up, while merely a sprinkling of flakes has reached the ground.

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Agents wanted in some localities.

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TORONTO

St. John's Nfld. land sealing season the arrival back in Ronger and Thetis fleet to return to grounds. The total was about 126,096 about \$200,000, approximately greater year.

Charlottetown, P. of this province has succeeded in raising four seed cats and cert of the best variety demand for island of grain or potato for the supply.

Halifax, N.S. British Columbia has had all its fishery boats (over 210) in the water for the first time in the history of the province.

St. John's Nfld. C. A. (at St. John's) with a total of \$24,000, reported on a general business and to paratous and parts authorized to open and receiving mail.

Quebec, Que. B. Manchester, N.H. striking text in Canadian origin other textile cut to their native land or take land, are contemplating step.

Toronto, Ont. of the province of in 1921 by 116,000.

Agriculture Re by

A despatch from says:—M controlled with from a radio to pected to rev culture of the one of the next in the use of seen by John H. Jr. "Work weeks can be he says.

Noted son of Hammond is to radio control ships, airplanes, biles, and more method of sending sages privately over the length.

Old Age and

It used to be r appropriate for a success from active life s passed the age of was in fact the g looked forward; y abandoning the m and vegetating in dlerly men with n were not happy i usually did not u under it. There w ceptance of what s—that the human o chine, rusts out to disuse.

Nowadays, wh men have the purp active busne s, who cumulated a suffie seldom with the o to give up work. I with an intention to to work of the m literary work, in work, it may be m don't talk first age of settlement being luxurious o old age, discove which represent more endearing not satisfy the pr present time. Th recreation, but a satisfies old age g flies youth.

Mental activity to be in some way who keeps mentally outlive the man w sluggish. A pers middle age does n the tendency to n no very strong gr —Youth's Compan