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The Cow Puncher

BY ROBERT J. C. STEAD

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CHAPTER XIV.—(Cont'd.)

Dave hesitated a few moments, as he threw his mind back over the years that had gone by since the day when Conward proposed a partnership to him. He saw again his little office where he ground out "stuff" for The Call, the littered desk and floor, the cartoons on the walls, the big shears, and the paste-pot—yes, the paste-pot, and the locker he had installed to protect it, and his select file of time copy, from depredation. And the smell of printer's ink; even yet, when business took Dave into a printing office, the smell of ink brought back those old, happy days. Happy days? When he worked more hours than a man should work, for less salary than a man should get; when the glorious out-of-doors called him and his soul rebelled against the despotism of fate! Yes, surely they were happy days. He smiled a moment as he thought of them; paused to dally with them on his way to an answer for Conward; then skimmed quickly down the surface of events to this present evening. More wonderful had the years been than any dream of fiction; no wizard's wand had ever worked richer magic.

"You remember, don't you?" Conward repeated.

"Oh, about the coal?" Dave laughed. The moment of reminiscence had restored his good humor. "Yes, I suppose it was a bargain. You have held me to it pretty well."

"Let it remain a bargain to the end," said Conward. "It is the only way we can finish up."

Dave dropped the subject. There appeared to be nothing to gain from pursuing it further. They were in the grip of a System—a System which had found them poor, had suddenly made them wealthy, and now, with equal suddenness, threatened to make them poor again. It was like war—kill or be killed. It occurred to Dave that it was even worse than war. War has in it the qualities of the heroic; splendid bravery; immeasurable self-sacrifice; that broad spirit of devotion to a vague ideal which, for lack of a better name, is called patriotism. This System had none of that. It was more like assassination. . . .

Night had settled when Dave left the office. The champagne sky had deepened into a strip of copper; the silhouettes were soft and black; street lights studded the bank of foothills to the west like setting stars. Darkness had tucked the distance that lay between the city and the Rockies in the lap of Night, and the great ridge stood up close and clear, prodding its jagged edge into the copper pennant of the day's farewell. A soft wind blew from the south-west; June was in the air. June, too, was in Dave's heart as he walked the few blocks to his bachelor quarters. What of the drab injustice of business? Let him forget that; now it was night . . . and she had called him Dave. He climbed the steps to his rooms with energy and life tingling in his limbs; then he stood in his window and for a long while watched the traffic in the street below. That is, his eyes were directed to the traffic, but what he saw was a merry girl in a brown sweater, showering her glances of admiration upon a raw youth of the ranges whose highest ambition was to break six bottles with six bullets. And she had even held that to be a worthy ambition. She had said, "Perhaps the day is coming when our country will want men who can shoot and ride more than it will want lawyers or professors." He smiled at the recollection of her words. The romantic days of youth! like the mirage of sunrise they fade and are lost in the morning of life. . . . And their young philosophies! The night they found the dead calf; he had propounded the wisdom that it is always the innocent thing that suffers; that the critter that can't run gets caught. Well, that seemed to hold good. Wasn't that what Conward had argued to him this very afternoon, and he had found no answer? He wondered what Reenie's experience had been. . . . And then the compact under the spruce trees. . . . "Come to me—like that——" she had said, "and then—then we'll know." And to-day she had called him Dave.

He dressed with care. The Chinese boy was never more obsequious in his attentions, and Dave never presented a more manly appearance. It was not until he was about to leave his rooms that he remembered he must dine alone; he had been dressing for her, unconsciously. The realization brought him up with something of a shock. "This will never do," he said. "I can't eat alone to-night. And I can't ask Reenie, so soon after the incident with her mother. I know—Bert Morrison." He reached for the telephone and rang her number. Had anyone charged Dave with fickleness in his affections he would have laughed at the absurdity. Had he not remained true to one great passion through the dangerous decade of his life? A man always thinks of the decade just ended as the dangerous decade. And Bert Morrison was a good friend. As he waited at the telephone he recalled the impulse which had seized him when they had last parted. But the recollection brought only a glow of friendship for Bert. There was no hint of danger in it.

Her number did not answer. He thought of Edith Duncan. But Edith lived at home, and it was much too late to extend a formal dinner invitation. There was nothing for it but to eat alone. He suddenly became conscious of the great loneliness of his bachelor life. After all, he was quite as much alone in the city as he had been in his boyhood in the hills. He began to moralize on this subject of loneliness. It was very evident to him now that his life had been empty and shallow. It was rather evident that any single life is empty and shallow. Nature had made no mistake in decreeing that humans should live in pairs. Dave had never thought much on that point before, but now it struck him as so obvious that none could fail to see its logic. The charm of bachelorhood was a myth which only needed contact with the gentle atmosphere of feminine affection to be exposed.

The Chinese boy coughed deferentially, and Dave was recalled from his reverie. He took his hat and coat and went into the street. It was his custom to take his meals at a modest eating-place on a side avenue, but to-night he directed his steps to the best hotel the city afforded. There was no wisdom in dressing for an event unless he was going to deflect his course somewhat from the daily rutine.

The dining-hall was a blaze of light; the odor of early roses blended with imported perfumes, and strains of sweet, subdued music trembled through the room in accompaniment to the merry-making of the diners. Dave paused for a moment, awaiting the beck of a waiter, but in that moment his eye fell on Conward, seated at a table with Mrs. Hardy and Irene. Conward had seen him, and was motioning to him to join them. The situation was embarrassing, and yet delightful. He was glad he had dressed for dinner.

"Join us, Elden," Conward said, as he reached their table. "Just a little dinner to celebrate to-day's transaction. You will not refuse to share to that extent?"

Dave looked at Mrs. Hardy. Had he been dealing with Conward and Mrs. Hardy alone he would have excused himself, but he had to think of Irene. That is, he had to justify her by being correct in his manners. And as he looked from mother to daughter he realized that Irene had not inherited all her beauty from her father. In their dinner gowns Mrs. Hardy was sedate and even beautiful, and her daughter ravishing. Dave thought he had not before seen so much womanly charm in any figure.

"Do join us," said Mrs. Hardy. It was evident to Mrs. Hardy that it would be correct for her to support Mr. Conward's invitation.

"You are very kind," said Dave, as he seated himself. "I had not hoped for this pleasure." And yet the pleasure was not unmixed. He felt that Conward had out-played him. It was Conward who had done the gracious thing. And Dave could not prevent Conward doing the gracious thing without himself being ungracious. . . .

He was aware of being under the close scrutiny of Mrs. Hardy. True, Conward sought to monopolize her attention. He had an ingratiating way with strangers; he struck a confidential note that quickly called forth confidence in return, and Dave was chagrined to see that not only was his partner creating the intended impression upon Mrs. Hardy, but his sallies and witticisms were gradually winning response from Irene. And the more he was annoyed at this turn of affairs the less was he able to arrest it. As Conward's guest he could not quarrel, and his fear of over-stepping the mark if he engaged in discussion induced a silence which migoht easily have been mistaken for mental inanition. He contented himself with being punctiliously correct in his table etiquette.

Perhaps he could have followed no wiser course. Dave's manners had an effect upon Mrs. Hardy similar to that which she had experienced from the decent civilization of the Western city. To her it seemed impossible that a raw youth, bred on the ranges—a cow puncher—could conduct himself correctly in evening dress at a fashionable table. It was more than impossible—it was heterodox; it was a defiance of all the principles upon which caste is based, and to Mrs. Hardy caste was the one safe line of demarkation between refinement and vulgarity. So she noted Elden's correct deportment, even to—as it seemed to her—his correct modesty in taking little part in the conversation, with a sense that all this was a disguise, and that presently he would, figuratively, burst forth from his linen and broadcloth and stand revealed in chaps and bandana. But the meal progressed with no such development, and Mrs. Hardy had a vague sense that this young man was not dealing fairly with her. He was refusing to live up to her preconceived ideas of what his part should be. Had Mrs. Hardy been capable of analyzing her own emotions correctly, she would have known that Dave was undermining her belief in caste, and without caste there could be no civilization! But Mrs. Hardy was not a deep self-analyst. Those who accept all distinctions as due to external causes have no occasion to employ any deep mental subtlety in classifying their acquaintances. So, as has been stated, the impression created upon her mind by Elden's proper conduct was one of vague annoyance that proper conduct should be found in one not reared within the charmed circle of the elite.

(To be continued.)

Provincial.

Before you came I got the papers read
So I could talk to you of diplomats,
And I could say just what the papers said.
And then you asked about the tiger cats,
And said you liked my waving mane of hair,
And said the old town had not changed a bit.

It's nice and restful for you, isn't it?
I know just how Miss Mary in her chair
Feels when folks call—and now you've gone again.
If you lived here and I lived over there
I would come back from dealing with great men
To see you and the "dear old town" again,
But I'd not talk to you of tiger cats.

I dreamed last night an angel pushed
With both hands on the apple tree
Under my pillow, till he crushed
The black bark, and the rings of wood
Split at his touch, and there you stood
Inside; your eyes danced merrily
As you reached out your arms to me.
But now by day the tree looks just the same
As it did before you came.

I had more sense than you had, anyway,
When we stood laughing at the butting lamb,
And when we left the pail down in the spring,
And when we raced beside the beaver dam,
I'm glad I never heard your whispering,
I'm glad I never let you play with me
And set the neighbors' tongues a-gossiping.
You'd be as distant as you are to-day,
And I'd be that much worse off than I am.

—Viola C. White.

Alphabet for the Blind.

"Chinese is a marvelous language," said M. de La Palice, "but only people who know it can make themselves understood in it." The same could be said of the Braille alphabet, since only the initiated can decipher it. From this results a great difficulty for the blind to correspond with the seeing; for it is, in general, only in the immediate surrounding that this conventional writing is known. In order to remedy this inconvenience a writing in the usual characters has for a long time been sought which can be read by all.

The first who had this idea was Braille himself, but, not succeeding in obtaining a satisfactory result, he renounced it. Balla, Clo and M. Roya, professor of philosophy at the College of Epernay, also made interesting attempts in this direction.

Father Cantonnet has now perfected a writing method in relief, in the usual characters, which seems definite and which has been approved by the inter-Allied congress of the mutilated. His alphabet follows as near as possible the Roman characters and retains their synthetic form and appearance so much so that they can be easily deciphered. Certain letters as "T," "L" or "I" are absolutely identical with ours, excepting that they are formed by a succession of points instead of a continued stroke.

This method does not pretend to dethrone the Braille which remains excellent for the initiated, but it will permit the blind to correspond with any one.

Canon Nouet, who has found a similar method, has had it blended with that of Father Cantonnet and was able to adapt it to the Greek, Slavic and Hebrew. . . .

It is to be added that the congress for the amelioration of the fate of the blind at its last meeting, of July 21, adopted the Cantonnet-Nouet writing.

Her Age.

It is not an ordinary lawyer who can overcome a woman's reluctance to tell her age, as was illustrated in a case recently tried in a Pennsylvania court.

"And what is your age, madam?" asked the attorney.

"My own," she answered promptly.

"I understand that, madam, but how old are you?"

"I am not old, sir," with indignation.

"I beg your pardon, madam. I mean how many years have you passed?"

"None; the years have passed me."

"All?"

"I never heard of them stopping."

"Madam, you must answer my question. I want to know your age."

"I don't know that the acquaintance is desired by the other side."

"I don't see why you refuse to answer my question," said the attorney, coaxingly. "I am sure I would tell you how old I was if I were asked."

"But nobody would ask you, for everybody knows you are old enough to know better than to be asking a woman her age, so there."

And the attorney passed on to the next question.

Satisfies the sweet tooth, and —aids appetite and digestion.

Cleanses mouth and teeth.

A great boon to smokers, relieving hot, dry mouth.

Combines pleasure and benefit.

Don't miss the joy of the new WIPS—the candy-coated peppermint tid bit!

Chew it after every meal.

Packed Tight— Kept Right

C16

This Day.

Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. To-morrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. This day is all that is good and fair. It is too dear, with its hopes and invitations, to waste a moment on the yesterdays.—Emerson.

Industries Destroyed by Insects.

Seven hundred and sixty million dollars. That is the amount of the loss caused this year to the cotton growers of the United States by the ravages of the boll weevil.

This insect threatens to destroy one of the greatest agricultural industries in America.

While everyone is vaguely aware that injurious insects destroy man's crops, his stock, and his property to the tune of many millions yearly, it is only of late years that anything like definite estimates have been made of such losses.

Take the warble fly, the ravages of which are felt by the leather trade and the meat industry. These insects lay their eggs on the hides of animals, and the chrysalis bores through the hides. Several hundred holes may be found in one hide, and the British Board of Agriculture estimates the loss in Great Britain from this insect at $10,000,000 a year.

The blow-fly costs Australian sheep farmers between $1,500,000 and $2,500,000 yearly, but this is a small matter compared with the ruin caused by the cattle-tick, which, appearing in 1893, has now become a threat to three great States. Whole herds have been destroyed, and the damage done is said to exceed $100,000,000.

In one year $2,500,000 worth of damage was done by locusts to crops in one section of the Transvaal. The only way of destroying them is by treating their breeding places with an arsenical solution.

Italy's plague is the oil-fly, which devastates the olive yards. In southeastern Italy this insect has done $35,000,000 worth of damage within the last twelve years.

In a bad year hop aphis is reckoned to cost English hop growers as much as $15,000,000. The aphis increases more rapidly than any other insect, and the numbers infesting a single cherry tree have been calculated at 12,000,000. In India aphides are said to destroy each year crops to the value of $45,000,000

Dye Any Garment or Old Drapery in Diamond Dyes

Buy "Diamond Dyes" and follow the simple directions in every package. Don't wonder whether you can dye or tint successfully, because perfect home dyeing is guaranteed with Diamond Dyes even if you have never dyed before. Worn, faded dresses, skirts, waists, coats, sweaters, stockings, draperies, hangings, anything, become like new again. Just tell your druggist whether the material you wish to dye is wool or silk or whether it is linen, cotton, or mixed goods. Diamond Dyes never streak, spot, fade, or run.

Telegrams were first sent under the sea by cable in 1850 between England and France.

The Wanyamwezi Carries the Mail.

There should be more men like the Wanyamwezi who served Mr. W. D. M. Bell in South Africa. He has courage; he has shrewdness—and he has cartilage, as is "Message to Garcia." When Mr. Bell, who relates his experiences in Country Life, left his cattle ranch to hunt for elephants his mail was forwarded to him properly until a new district commissioner came. The new commissioner did not know that Mr. Bell was not at his ranch, so one day when one of the old Wanyamwezi caretakers made his bi-weekly report the commissioner told him casually to take some letters to his master.

The old man, said Mr. Bell, took the letters without a word. Though he knew that he had a journey of six hundred miles before him, he went straight back to the ranch and prepared to follow me into country much of which was quite unknown. Being a thrifty old soul,—he was then sixty-five years old—he had a large stock of dreid smoked beef from cows that had died. His preparations, therefore, were soon made. An inveterate snuff taker, he had only to grind up a good quantity of tobacco, and he was ready for the journey.

Shouldering his rifle and carrying the packet of letters cunningly guarded against wet, he set off through the wilderness and headed due north. Sleeping by night alone by his camp fire and traveling the whole of the day, he came wanderingly through what to almost anyone else would have been hostile tribe after hostile tribe countries where, if I sent at all, I sent at least five guns as escort, he came through without trouble. So sublimely unaware was he of any feeling of nervousness and so bold and confident was his bearing that nothing happened. He chose the routes that led through the most populous centres, he did not dodge along neutral zones between tribes as a nervous man would have done. Wherever he went he slept in the largest village and demanded and got the best of everything. Eventually he reached me with the letters. He walked into camp as if he had left it only five minutes before, and he still had smoked beef and snuff.

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Woman's Interests

Choosing Your Corset.

Honestly speaking, all women want to look their best, but to look one's best means something more vital than the wearing of a corset that gives figure lines at the expense of [illegible] and health. A corset should be worn with intelligence, selecting the particular style which will not only give its wearer good lines, but protect the wearer's health by the comfort obtained through wearing a hygienically correct support.

Observation shows us that at about the age of thirty there is a definite increase in the waist measure. This is not caused by excess flesh alone, but also by a sagging of the abdominal muscles. The sagging of these muscles causes the vital organs to fall, and as soon as an organ has left its normal position there is danger of disease. This disease may be slight and cause only minor ills—headache, nerves, a poor complexion, wrinkles, backache—things that are not fatal, but things that make it hard for us and for those who live with us. Or, it may cause some of our most dreaded diseases and the greatest of suffering. These conditions are not confined to the uncorseted form; the wearing of a poorly designed or incorrect style of corset would produce equally bad results.

An incorrect corset, one which is not firmly anchored at the hip-line, one which does not exert gentle pressure over the back and give support to the abdominal muscles, will "ride up" on the figure and anchor at the waist-line (giving undue pressure there) and will exert a downward pressure over the abdomen.

This sagging of the abdominal muscles makes it almost impossible for a woman to stand correctly, and a slouching figure means a loss of that graceful poise that is the very foundation of style. Some of the most famous dressmakers go so far as to say it is impossible to dress a woman becomingly whose figure is out of proportion and who does not stand correctly. Proper support will overcome many difficulties, so there should be great care in the selection of corsets scientifically designed to type. Common sense shows us that a corset which would fit a slim, tall woman, would not be suitable for the stout woman, even though it were used in a larger size. Corsets are designed to use the right number of bones at the right place, and have the right amount of fullness to take care of any kind of figure and gently persuade it to correct posture and ideal proportions.

It is one thing to design corsets to suit the individual type and another thing to get the corset on the type of woman for which it was designed. For practical purposes, women are divided into various types of figures: the short slender, the short heavy, the tall slender, the tall heavy, the average, the large below the waist, the large above the waist, the short waisted, the curved back. A woman should study herself and know to which group she belongs. The average woman measures five feet five inches in height, thirty-four bust, twenty-seven inch waist and thirty-seven inch hip.

Remember that a correct corset protects the health, it makes the best of the figure and it wears well because it so follows the natural outlines and movements of the figure that there is no undue strain placed upon it. A corset designed to type will bring one to graceful proportions, one curve growing out of another with no part made prominent.

When about to purchase a corset go to the best store within reach, ask for a standard make and permission to try it on in the dressing room, which should be provided for the purpose. The saleswoman in attendance should know just how to help you select the right size and style. If you are not within reach of such help, fitting charts are now provided which show very plainly and conclusively just the corset a woman should wear to suit her figure, emphasize her good points and make her comfortable.

Where Birds Beat Us.

Nothing that man has ever invented can compare with the wonderful flying mechanism which Nature has given to birds.

Gulls, in particular, are far ahead of any aeroplane or glider. Their movements through the air are amazingly graceful and effortless.

When a gull starts on its flight, it lifts its wings, thus trapping a volume of air beneath its body. On the downward stroke this air is compressed and forced out, and in its efforts to escape it naturally forces the bird upwards and forwards. Then, when it has reached a sufficient height, the gull can glide for enormous distances without any effort.

In landing, too, birds can achieve what no machine has ever done. They can alight against a vertical cliff, using their wings as brakes and holding on with their specially-equipped feet. Compare this with the space required by an aeroplane before it can come to rest on the ground!

A Touching Tribute.

Chairman (addressing a meeting)—"I am sure we will be very sorry our secretary is not here to-night. I cannot say we miss 'is vacant chair, but I do say we miss 'is vacant face."

Bovril makes you enjoy life

"CRACK BY THE TIDE"

In spite of the sterling assets of the social bubbles in history, by which America alone has lost a cool $1,000,000,000, Germans, very financial experts, can hardly save herself from the ruin of paper marks with which she ruined other nations.

From Reynold's Newspaper (London).

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