The Cow Puncher

BY ROBERT J. C. STEAD.

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Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Dr. Eardy, famous specialist, and his daughter Irene, meet with an accident while on a motoring trip in the foothills of Alberta and find a refuge in the cabin of the Elden ranch where dwell David and his dissolute father. The girl and boy promise to meet again in the future. After his father's drunken death David goes to seek his fortune in town and loses all his money at a pool table. He spends an evening with Conward, his poolroom acquaintance, and two actresses and takes liquor for the first time. Next morning he awakes from a drunken sleep resolved to amend. He is attracted by the singing of a choir girl in a church; then he attended a Socialist meeting. When delivering coal at the home of Mr. Duncan he is offered evening tuition in return for occasional services as a coachman. The first evening he discovers the choir girl is Irene Duncan. Under his tutor's careful direction Dave's education thrives apace. He becomes a reporter on The Call. One Sunday he told Edith the story of his life and his contact with Irene. Conward drops in with talk about "industrial development" and fires David's imagination. They form a real estate partnership. A boom follows, making David a millionaire, but he vaguely distrusts his partner. Roberta Morrison, compiler of the woman's page of The Call, comes to his office one evening and Dave orders dinner.

CHAPTER XI.—(Cont'd.)

"A recherche repast," screamed Bert, half through her soup, with a great burst of merriment. "Oh, I must tell you. You remember the Metfords? You used to shovel coal for them. I know you're no snob, or I wouldn't put it so brutally. Of course, they're rich. Sold the old stable-yard for a quarter of a million, or thereabouts, and are now living in style. Some style! When they have guests, as they nearly always have—there'll be parasites as long as there's easy money—old man Metford eats breakfast in evening dress. And she orders the chiffonier to take the guests down to the depot in their Packer. But one thing has gone to her heart. She didn't realize in time that it wasn't good form to be prolific. Now that she knows three is the limit she has sent the other six to the country. But that isn't what I started on. She called up this morning and gave me hell because I said yesterday that she had served a recherche repast at some function they pulled off the other night. 'See here, young woman,' she says, 'I want you to understand there's none of that recherche stuff on my tables. Nothing short of champagne, every drop of it.' I just yelled."

"Why didn't you print a retraction?"

"I don't know."

"I do. It's because, Miss Roberta, beneath your cynicism and your assumption of masculinity, you are as sympathetic as a young mother. It would be mean to put over anything like that, and you just can't do it."

"Nonsense. You see what I print at times——"

"Bert," he said suddenly, "why don't you get married?"

"Who, me?" Then she laughed. "I guess I'm too sympathetic. It would be mean to put over anything like that on a man, and a girl wouldn't have me."

"Well, then, why don't you buy some real estate?" he continued, jocularly. "Every man should have some dissipation—something to make him forget his other troubles."

"A little bite in the meal for that word, isn't it?"

He stared a moment, and then sprang to his feet. "I beg your pardon. What will you drink?"

"What you drink."

"But I drink coffee."

"So do I. . . . I may be mannish, Dave, but I don't think I'm a fool. I can understand a man drinking, but not a woman. It's too dangerous. . . . But I'll smoke a cigarette."

"Now, as for real estate. The fact is, I have invested."

A look came into his face which she did not understand. "With whom?" he demanded, almost peremptorily.

"With Conward & Elden," she answered, and the roguishness of her voice suggested that her despised jealousy lay not far from the surface. "What—are you about to be jealous?"

"Did you come to me?" She thought he was in deep earnest.

"I did," she answered carelessly. "As I looked for you, but you were not there, so Conward took me in hand. I followed his advice."

"Trust Conward?" he cried, almost fiercely.

"Good enough to be your partner, he."

It almost hurt more than she had thought his noise again.

"Real estate is the only subject I can't bear on," she continued, ignoring it. Dave, that for a shrewd business man you are awfully dense about Conward."

He remained silent for a few moments. He decided not to follow her lead. He knew that if she had anything explicit to say about Conward she would say it when she felt the time to be opportune, and not until then. He returned to the matter of her speculation.

"How much did you invest?"

"Not much. Just what I had."

"You mean all your savings?"

"Why not? It's all right, isn't it?"

He had risen and was standing again by the window. The long line of lights stretched out until they became mere diamond points on the velvet bosom of the night. Motor-cars sped noiselessly to and fro, save where, at the corner below, chauffeurs exercised their sirens. But neither the lights, nor the night, nor the movement and noises of the street had any part in the young man's consciousness.

"It's all right, isn't it?" she repeated.

"I'm afraid it isn't," he said at length, in a restrained voice. "I'm afraid it isn't."

"What do you mean?" she demanded. There was an accusation in her eyes that was hard to face.

"Bert," he continued, "did it ever occur to you that this thing must have an end—that we can't go on for ever lifting ourselves by our own bootstraps? We have built a city here, a great and beautiful city, almost as a wizard might build it by magic overnight. There was room for it here; there was occasion; there was justification for turning miles and miles of prairie land into city lots—lots which, in the nature of things, cannot possibly, in your time or mine, be required for city purposes. These lots should be producing wheat, oats, potatoes, cows, butter—that is what we must build our city on. We have been considering the effect rather than the cause. The cause is the country, the neglected country, and until it overtakes the city we must stand still, if we do not go back. Our prosperity has been built on borrowed money, and we have forgotten that borrowed money must, sometime, be repaid. Meanwhile, in the heart of the greatest agricultural country in the world, we bring our potatoes across the American Continent and our butter across the Pacific Ocean."

He had spoken with effort, as one who makes a bitter confession, yet tries to state the case fairly, without excuses and without violence.

"You mean that the boom is about to burst?" she said.

"Not exactly burst. It will not be so sudden as that. It will just ooze away, like a toy balloon pricked with a pin."

There was silence for some minutes. When she spoke at length it was with a tinge of bitterness.

"So you are unloading?"

"The firm is. I beg you, Bert, to believe that if I had known your intention I would have tried to dissuade you. I would have advised you to keep your money in the bank until after the air cleared. Three per cent. is small, but it is better than tax bills on unsaleable property."

"Why me particularly? I am only one of the great public. Why don't you give your conclusions to the world? When you were convinced that a period of inflation was about to occur you did not hesitate to say so. If I remember you used The Call for that purpose. Now that you see the reaction setting in, doesn't honesty suggest what your course should be?"

She had risen, and she, too, looked with unseeing eyes upon the busy street. There was reproach in her voice, Dave thought, rather than bitterness.

He spread his hands. "What's the use? The harm is done. To predict a collapse would be to precipitate a panic. It is as though we were passengers on a boat at sea. You and I know the boat is sinking, but the other passengers don't. They are making merry with champagne and motor-cars—if you can accept that figure—and revelry and easy money. Why spoil their remaining few hours by telling them they are headed for the bottom? . . . Besides, they are not deserving of sympathy after all. They are in the game because they wanted to make money without earning it. Gamblers, every one of them. And the man or woman who expects to get wealth without giving value should not whine if, by a turn of fate, he gives value without getting wealth."

After a moment she placed her fingers on his arm. "Forgive me, Dave," she said. "I didn't mean to whine."

"You didn't whine," he returned, almost fiercely. "It's not in you. You are too good a sport. But there will be lots of whinning in the coming months." Man-like, it did not occur to Dave that in that moment the girl had bid good-bye to her savings of a dozen years, and had merely looked up and said, "Forgive me, Dave. I didn't mean to whine." When he thought of it, long afterward, he had a sudden conviction that if he had realized then just how much of a brick she was he would have proposed to her on the spot. . . . And she would have laughed, and said, "Now, Dave, don't spoil our fun with anything like that."

What she did do was to let her hand creep up his arm until she could tap his cheek with her second finger. "Is this all the entertainment you can think of to-night?" she bantered.

He glanced at his watch. "It's late for a theatre," he said, "but we can ride. Which do you say—auto or horse-back?"

"I can't go horse-back in these clothes, and I don't want to change."

Dave pressed a button, and the omnipresent Chinese "boy" stood before him. "My car," he said. "The two-passenger car. I will not want a driver." Then, continuing to Miss Morrison, "You will need something more than that coat. Let me see. My smoking jacket should fit."

In a few minutes they were threading their way through the street traffic in Dave's machine. Whatever had been his forecast of impending disaster, the streets held little hint of it. They were congested with traffic and building material. Although it was late at night the imperious clamor of electric riveters rattled down from steel structures on every hand. Office blocks, with their rental space all contracted months in advance, were being rushed to completion by the aid of arc lights and double shifts. But presently the traffic thinned, and the car hummed through long residential avenues of comfortable homes. From a thousand unmasked windows came the glow of light; here and there were the strains of music. On and on they sped, until the city streets and the city lights fell behind, and the car was swinging along a fine country road, through a land marked with streams and bridges, and blocked out with fragrant bluffs of young poplars.

At last, after an hour's steady driving in a delight of motion too keep for conversation, they pulled up on the brow of a hill. A soft breeze from the south-west, sensuous with the smell of spruce and balm-o'-gilead, pressed, cool and gentle, against their faces, and far to the south-east some settler's burning straw pile lay like an orange-red coal on the lips of the prairie, from which she blew an incense of ruddy gold and ochre, fan-shaped against the heavens. Behind them, to the north, far-away city lights danced and sparkled in the lap of the foothills like diamonds strewn by some mighty and profligate Croesus. Dave switched off his lights, the better to appreciate the majesty of the night, and in the silence came the low murmur of water. There were no words. They sat and breathed it.

(To be continued.)

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Floodlights on Trains.

Brilliant night illumination of its picturesque transcontinental route, is the plan contemplated by a large railroad system in the United States. The idea, as conceived at present, is to equip the observation coaches of its fast limited trains with a battery of powerful floodlights. These lights would be arranged to cover a range of approximately 160 degrees, with sufficient height and depth to illuminate the canons, rivers, lakes, and mountains in the vicinity of the right of way, as the train rushes on through the night. Power for operating the lamps would be furnished by the axle-driven generators with which railroad cars are now commonly equipped, and which ordinarily are never used to their full capacity.

Although, thus far, the location of the flood-lights has been confined to the observation car, certain officials have suggested the advisability of placing them along the full length of the train. Also, further to enhance the effect, it has been proposed to employ lamps or reflectors of various colors, which would undoubtedly yield fairylike scenes, particularly when directed upon snow-covered surfaces. Railroad men in authority have nothing but praise for the scheme, and while eagerly awaiting the completion of the initial floodlighting equipment, have pointed out the fact that there is an addiional and practical value of the brilliant lights as a protection against rear-end collisions.

Autumn Meadows.

Ye have been fresh and green;
Ye have been filled with flowers,
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

Ye have beheld where they
With wicker arks did come,
To kiss and bear away
The richer cowslips home.

You've heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round,
Each virgin, like the spring,
With honeysuckles crowned.

But now we see none here
Whose silvery feet did tread,
And with dishevelled hair
Adorned this smoother mead.

Like unthrifts, having spent
Your stock, and needy grown,
You're left here to lament
Your poor estates alone.

—Robert Herrick.

From 1825 to 1826 770 banks stopped payment in England.

An interesting migration is that of several hundred Icelanders to the Tanana Valley in Alaska. Last fall a delegation of Icelanders took home such glowing reports of the opportunities in the far Northwest that the new colony was formed. Icelanders are of Scandinavian and Irish descent. They are good grain farmers and should succeed in a country so much more productive than their own.

——and the worst is yet to come

Stories of Famous People

Fair Sisters Puzzle the Prince.

An amusing incident of the Prince of Wales' Canadian tour comes to light from a small eastern Ontario town at the station of which the royal train stopped several times on its journeys back and forth between Toronto and Ottawa.

One evening, while engines were being changed and car wheels tapped, the Prince came on to the station platform for a constitutional. The usual crowd of onlookers was there, and in his usual charming manner the Prince held a miniature court on the platform, shaking hands with all who presented themselves, including one of the town's fairest belles.

The news of the Prince's arrival was soon heralded about town and the crowd at the station was rapidly augmented, amongst the newcomers being the sister of the aforementioned belle. She got in the line-up for hand-shaking, and, upon reaching the royal visitor, was greeted by the soft English voice saying: "Oh, come, now, you're kidding me! I shook hands with you once before."

While the girls were not twins, yet they looked much alike. However, the Prince had to admit that it was he who was doing the "kidding" when the other sister stepped up and he saw them both together.

His Only Chance.

The humorist of the law courts, Mr. Justice Darling, has received several handsome offers from publishers for his memoirs. They will certainly be well worth reading.

One of the many first-rate stories told about him is that of the witness who addressed a sharp rebuke to his wife in court.

"Be quiet,' said an attendant. "You mustn't reprove your wife here."

"Never mind," said Justice Darling in a stage whisper. "Let the poor fellow alone. Maybe this is the only chance he's got."

From "Scarecrow" to M.P.

One of the most interesting of British M.P.'s is Mr. George Edwards, who has been telling the story of his life to his constituents in South Norfolk in a lecture called "From Crow-Scaring to Westminster."

He began to earn wages when he was four and a half years old, receiving a shilling a week for scaring crows. At seven he was a horse-boy at one-and-six a week, and at ten a plough-boy at two shillings a week.

He gave up drinking and smoking in order to buy a few books to educate himself. Among other things he has been a Methodist preacher. As he was unable to read, he had to learn the lessons and hymns by heart.

"Pied Piper of Hamelin."

How many readers of Brownings famous "Pied Piper of Hamelin" know that the story told therein has a reputedly historical basis?

According to an old chronicler the affair happened, very much as described by Browning, at the town of Hamel, in Brunswick, on July 22nd, 1370.

There came to the town "an old kind of companion," who for the fantastical coat which he wore was called the Pied Piper. He offered to clear the town of rats for a certain sum, accomplished his task, was refused his just payment, and, in revenge, piped the children out of town, just as he had done the rats, and led them into an opening in a hillside, whence none ever returned.

The old story was brought to the poet's notice by his father, who himself wrote an amusing poem on the subject.

To take things easy will make you uneasy a little later on.

The natives of the wilds of Brazil are said to have a secret drug which they use before a battle, and which imbues them with superhuman courage.

An Oversight.

The school teacher was interested in the announcement by a little girl pupil that she had a new baby brother.

"And what is the baby's name?" the teacher asked.

"Aaron," was the reply.

A few days later the teacher inquired concerning Aaron, but the little girl regarded her in perplexity.

"Aaron?" she repeated.

"Your baby brother," the teacher prompted.

Understanding dawned upon the child's face.

"Oh, Aaron!' she exclaimed. "That was a mistake. It's Moses. He's very well, ma'am, thank you. Pa an' ma, they found we had an Aaron."

"Were you seasick crossing the ocean, Pat?" "Oi was turrible sick coming over, but nivver a qualm did Oi hov goin' back." "Really? How do you account for that?" "Sure and Oi nivver wint back, yure honor."

A piano left out of tune for an extended period cannot be put in satisfactory shape with one tuning. Sometimes it takes three tunings. It is economy to have your piano tuned twice a year.

CANADA'S WHEAT ON THE WAY TO MARKET

These illustrations show some of the several steps in the inspection and grading of the wheat crop of Western Canada on its way to the markets of the world. One picture is of a grader and his helper in a car of wheat, taking samples from the same; another a collector of small small sample bags from the railroad cars; a third is a scene in the office of the graders at the head of the Lakes classifying and tabulating the various samples.

Woman's Interests

What's In the School Lunch Basket?

With the opening of the new term of school, the minds of many mothers are again turned to the perplexing problem of the school lunch, and indeed at times it becomes a perplxeing one. To plan, in such a manner, as to always have just the right thing on hand for lunch is no simple task and this task becomes even more difficult to the mother who isn't just a few blocks from a grocery store, but oftentimes a few miles. Nevertheless, I believe my sympathies rest with the children who are obliged to eat these noonday lunches, for that has been my experience for some sixteen years.

Mary had a little lunch,
To tell the honest truth,
Too little; quite inadequate;
It wouldn't fill a tooth!

It went with her, this little lunch,
This paper, bread and bacon,
To school each day; she lost her punch,
Her health was sadly shaken!

'Til Mary's school served every day
A warm, milk soup nutritious.
Now ask her how she feels; she'll say,
"Oh, boy, I feel auspicious!"

The thought of the second stanza of this little jingle is seldom true, for the lunch packed by mother contains sufficient amount, but that amount may lack in nutrition, variety and an appetizing manner of packing. The normal child that gets "two miles of oxygen twice a day" needs plenty of nourishing food. It is an easy matter to determine those children who do not get it. The child who walks to school and plays hard all day needs a nutritious and appetizing lunch to build up the cells of his body that are being consumed by these activities. If the lunch basket doesn't supply its part of this needed vitality in the daily menu of the child, then the result is bound to attract attention.

There are still many cases where the problem is not solved by a "warm milk soup nutritious," as referred to in the third stanza. Some rural schools have furnished themselves with suitable equipment for serving at least one hot dish to each pupil at noon, but those cases are still the exception rather than the rule. However, I believe the time is coming when the spirit of co-operation in rural districts will be developed to such a measure when the rural school without hot lunches will be the exception in vice versa to the present precedent.

In preparing the contents of the lunch basket, the one great thing to be avoided is falling into a rut. Just because the child likes a certain dish is no reason why it should be in the lunch basket five days a week. It has been said, "Variety is the spice of life," and if it were changed to "Variety is the spice of the school lunch," I believe it would be equally true.

Sandwiches seem always to form the basis of any lunch and offer a good opportunity for daily change. The following are a number of fillings that will satisfy almost any appetite:

Chop very fine one-half dozen of the small inside stalks of celery, and two large tart apples, sprinkle lightly with salt and spread between slices of buttered bread.

Chop fine a bit of sliced cucumber pickle and some left-over salmon, pour a little melted butter over it, sprinkle with salt and pepper and spread on buttered bread.

Grate hard-boiled eggs on slices of buttered bread and sprinkle with salt and pepper. A bit of prepared mustard or mayonnaise may be appreciated by some.

Spread bread with chopped ham and thin slices of dill pickle.

With one cup of chopped celery mix one tablespoon of walnuts and five olives, or a small pickle. This is good with dark bread.

To one cup of chopped celery add one cup of cooked chopped raisins and moisten with a little lemon juice and mayonnaise.

If a little lemon juice or some nut meats are added to many of the jams or conserves they will make tasty fillings for sweet sandwiches.

Thin slices of cheese, pimento cheese, peanut butter, or slices of bacon add a welcome variety.

If graham, brown, rye, bran, or raisin bread is used for these sandwiches, the change will help to tickle the palate.

The price of a thermos bottle for the lunch basket should be considered as money well invested. Many things can be carried in it and it gives a splendid opportunity to carry something warm for the lunch. It can be filled with the many different soups, broths or boilons, or cocoa, or milk, with a change every day.

For the mother who plans the lunch the day before, there are many possibilities in little baked puddings, such as rice with dates or raisins, custards with jelly, a baked apple, junket, a cup of potato salad, or the many orange fruit jellies that are such favorites with the children.

Fruit of some sort, such as the apple, orange, bannana, peach, which can be had when fresh, may be varied with prunes, dates or raisins when these are not to be obtained. Pickles of which there are many varieties to suit the individual taste, give a good relish to the school lunch, as do the fancy cakes and cookies.

When the lunch is packed everything will be in fine order and there will be no cake on the sandwiches, or the pudding will not taste of the apple that was near it, if each article is wrapped separately in waxed paper. A paper napkin should also be packed with the lunch, that the child may keep in mind his table manners while eating.

It is not necessary to have a wide variety for the lunch basket or an elaborate one, for a simple lunch with plenty of it, is much more suitable. Just see there is a little change each day. A little planning on mother's part will soon overcome the habit of a child grabbing a sandwich and running out to play without finishing his lunch. The teacher should also assume this as her duty for the welfare of the children in her school to see that each one takes sufficient time to digest his lunch before rushing out to play.

"The Way I Do It."

I have enjoyed reading how other housekeepers "did things" and so thought I would tell of some helps I have learned. In canning sweet peppers, I wash them, remove the seeds, cut them up, if necessary, and scald a few minutes in strong salt water, then drain them and pack into small jars or wide-mouthed bottles and fill to overflowing with hot vinegar, put in cork, and when cold dip into melted paraffin. If preferred the bottles can be filled with the hot brine. Mine keep fine. I use empty veesline jars if I have only a few peppers.

I can my grape juice for jelly and make the jelly latter in the winter. By straining the canned juice while cold all crystals will be removed, not to form again.

Old stocking tops sewed together and saturated with any good polishing oil—such as is used on dust mops—make fine cloths to rub the dust and dew marks off of the auto and saves lots of washing.

Pieces of crepe paper soaked a few minutes in warm water, make a nice dye for faded hair ribbons, old bits of silk for fancy work, white silk waists, etc. This is nice for children as it changes colors quickly and cheaply.

Was troubled by mice nibbling the paraffin off of can covers so tried baiting mouse traps with tiny pieces of paraffin and found it worked fine. It does not come off of the hook as easily as soft bait and before they could loosen it they were caught.—Subscriber.

How Do You Pronounce It?

Grandfather always said his "gooms" hurt, meaning the fleshy covering of his jaws. But when he had to masticate his food with those toothless jaws, he said, "I guess I'll have to gum it." The word is pronounced the same whether as noun or verb, whether it means the covering of the jaws or the stuff that you buy for a nickel a package. Don't let the dentist your "goons" hurt.

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Forgot the Baby.

The clergyman drew near to the baptismal font and directed that the candidates for baptism should be presented. A woman in the congregation gave a gasp of dismay and turned to her husband, whom she addressed in a strenuous whisper.

"There! I knew we'd forget something. John, run home as fast as you can and fetch the baby."

Perfectly Safe.

"Are you sure," an anxious patient once asked a physician, "are you sure that I shall recover? I have heard that doctors sometimes give wrong diagnosis and have treated patients for pneumonia who afterwards died of typhoid fever."

"You've been woefully misinformed," replied the medico indignantly. "If I treat a man for pneumonia he dies of pneumonia."

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