The Cow Puncher

BY ROBERT J. C. STEAD.

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CHAPTER XXI.—(Cont'd.)

"Your country needs you more," Irene whispered. "It is better that way. And what a man you are in uniform! I think I see you smashing heads instead of bottles. Six out of six, Dave! It's awful, but you must do it. Already we know what has happened in Belgium. You will forget your own wrongs in the greater wrongs of others. . . . And I shall join the service as a nurse. My father was a doctor, and I can soon pick it up."

She chatted on, but he had become suddenly grave. "I don't think that is your course, Irene," he said. "This is going to be a bigger job than it looked. The Government will get soldiers and nurses; the popular imagination turns to such things. But it will be neither soldiers nor nurses that will win the war. I feel sure of that now. It has come to me, perhaps as a kind of presentiment, but I feel absolutely sure. The determining factor will be food. The world's margin is narrow enough in normal times, and now we are plunged into the abnormal. Millions of men will be taken from production and turned to purposes of destruction. They will be taken from offices, where they need little food, and put in the trenches, where they need much food. Countries will be devastated, armies will retreat, destroying all food as they go. Ships will go down with cargoes of wheat; incendiaries [illegible] warehouses of food. I do not regret my decision; I believe my place is in the trenches; but those less fit for the fight than I, must, in some form or other, produce food. That includes the women; it includes you."

"Me? But what can I do?"

"Since I left home I've thought a good deal of the old ranch. I despised it in those prosperous days—those days we thought we were prosperous—but the prosperity is gone and the ranch remains. It still lies out there, just as it did when you and your father motored down that afternoon a dozen years ago. I think you'll have to go back there, Reenie. I think you'll have to take the boy Charlie, and what other help you can get, and go back to the old ranch and raise something for the soldiers to eat. You can do it. There are good men to be had—men who can't very well carry a rifle, but can drive a plow. And believe me, Reenie, it's the plow that's going to win. Go back and put them at it. Think of every furrow as another trench in the defences which shall save your home from the fate of Belgium's homes. It's not as easy as going to the front; it hasn't got the heroic ring to it, and I suppose there are many who will commercialize it. Let them. We shall need their profits after the war to pay our debts. But it's the thing that must be done. And you'll do it, won't you?"

"I'll do whatever needs to be done, Dave. I'd rather be by your side, or as near as may be, but if you say that my duty lies back on the old ranch I shall go back to the old ranch and raise food for my soldier. And when it's all over we shall ride those old hillsides again. . . . Up the canyon, you remember, Dave? The little niche in the wall of the canyon, and all the silence and the sunlight? . . . For ever. . . ."

CHAPTER XXII.

Any philosophy which accepts the principle that the great, ever-shadowing events of life are subject to an intelligent controlling influence must of necessity grant that the same principle applies to the most commonplace and everyday experiences. It is impossible to believe that the World War, for example, has a definite place in the eternal scheme of the universe without believing the same of the apparently most trivial incident in the life of Kaiser Wilhelm, Lloyd George, or Woodrow Wilson, or, for that matter, of the humblest soldier in the ranks. The course of the greatest events of events may well be deflected by incidents so commonplace as to quite escape the notice of the casual observer.

Some such thought as this comforted me—or, at least, would have comforted me, had I thought it—when a leaking gasoline tank left me, literally as well as figuratively, high and dry in the foothills. The sun of an August afternoon blazed its glory from a cloudless sky; far across the shimmering hills copper-colored patches of ripening wheat stood out ruddy and glowing like twentieth century armor on the brown breast of the prairie; low in a valley to the left a ribbon of silver-green mountain water threaded its way through fringes of spruce and cottonwood, while on the uplands beyond sleek steers drowsed in the sunshine, and far to the westward the Rockies slept unconcerned in their draperies of afternoon purple. All these scenes the eye took in without enthusiasm, almost without approval; and then fell on the white-washed ranch buildings almost in the shadow underneath. And in these days a ranch—almost any ranch—means gasoline.

I soon was at the door. The walls had been recently whitewashed; there were new shingles of red cedar on the roof; flowers bloomed by the path that led down to the corrals. My knock attracted a little chap of two-and-a-half or three years; his stout hands shoved the screen back, and I found myself ushered into his company. There evidently was no one else about, so I visited, and we talked on those things which are of importance in the world of three-year-olds.

"Muvver's don to the wiver," he confided. "She tum back pwetty soon."

"And Father?" I asked. "Where is he?"

Into the dark eyes came a deeper look; they suddenly shone with the spirituality of a life only three years removed from the infinite. By what instruction, I afterwards wondered, by what almost divine charm had she been able to instil into his young mind the honor and the glory and the pride of it? For there was pride, and something more than pride; adoration, perhaps, in his words as he straightened up and said in perfect English, "My father was a soldier. He was killed at Courcelette."

I looked in his little, sunburned face; in his dark, proud eyes; and presently a strange mist enveloped the room. How many little faces, how many pairs of eyes! It was just fading away when a step sounded on the walk, and I arose as she reached the door.

"The Man of the House has made me at home," I managed to say. "I am shipwrecked on the hill, for a little gasoline."

"There is plenty out in the field, where the tractor is," she replied. "You will find it without difficulty. Or if you care to wait here, Charlie may be along presently."

Her voice had a sweet, modulated tones, with just that touch of pathos which only the Angel of Suffering knows how to add. And her face was fair, and gentle, and a little sad, and very sweet.

"He has told me," I said. There seemed no reason why I should not say it. She had entered into the sisterhood—that universal sisterhood of suffering which the world has known in these long, lonely years. . . . And it was between us, for we were all in the family. There was no occasion to scrape acquaintance by slow, conventional thrust and parry.

"Yes," she said, sitting down and motioning me to a chair. "I was bitter at first. But gradually I got a different view of it. Gradually I came to feel and know that all we can feel and know here is on the surface; on the outside, as you might say, and we can't know the purpose until we are inside. It is as though life were a riddle, and the key is hidden, and the door behind which the key is hidden is called Death. And I don't believe it's all for nothing; I won't believe it's all for nothing. If I believed it was all for nothing I would quit; we would all quit.

"Then there is the suffering," she continued, after a pause. "I don't know why there should be suffering, but I know if there were no suffering there would be no kindness. It is not until you are hit—hard hit—that you begin to think of other people. Until then all is selfishness. But we women—we women of the war—we have nothing left to be selfish for. But we have the whole world to be unselfish for. It's all different, and it can never go back. We won't let it go back. We've paid too much to let it go back."

It was hard to find a reply. "I think I knew your husband, a little," I ventured. "He was a—a man."

"He was all that," she said. She arose and stood for a moment in an attitude of hesitation; her fingers went to her lips as though enjoining caution. Then, with quick decision, she went into an inner room, from which she returned with a letter.

"If you knew him you may care to read this," she said. "It's very personal, and yet, some way, everything is impersonal now, in a sense. There has been such a common cause, and such a wave of common suffering, that it seems to flood out over the individual and embrace us all. Individualism is gone. It's the community now; the state; mankind, if you like, above everything. I suppose, so far as German kultur stands for that, it has been imposed upon the world. . . . So this is really, in a sense, your letter as well as mine."

(To be concluded.)

New One to Her

Picture Agent—"Lady, this is the latest thing in enlargements."

Housewife—"Lan' sakes! Who'd ever thought they'd get to making 'em upside down!"

NURSES

The Toronto Hospital for Incurables, in affiliation with Bellevue and Allied Hospitals, New York City, offers a three years' Course of Training to young women, having the required education and desirous of becoming nurses. This Hospital has adopted the eight-hour system. The pupils receive uniforms of the School, a monthly allowance and travelling expenses to and from New York. For further information apply to the Superintendent.

This is the Way to Support Music.

The state legislature of Minnesota has made a grant of three hundred thousand dollars to the University of Minnesota for music purposes, including equipment. The city of Philadelphia has appropriated forty thousand dollars for free orchestral concerts to be given in Fairmount Park by the famous Philadelphia Orchestra. The city of New York is planning a Memorial Centre of music at a proposed outlay of thirty millions of dollars to occupy two blocks facing Central Park. The Austrian government is having portraits of famous composers appear on its new issue of postage stamps.

Great Britain is instituting a series of memorial services of the great musicians of the past and erecting tablets to the memory of such men as Arne, Purcell, John Blow and others. The King of Italy has conferred the ribbon of Commander of the Crown upon Gigli, the Metropolitan Opera House tenor, as recognition of his services in diffusing Italian art in the United States.

The above few instances are indicative of growing public appreciation of music and musicians, scarcely a week goes by without some record of appreciation by public bodies and authorities, and it will be seen that the movement is world wide.

Appreciation.

"John, dear, did you enjoy the Welsh rabbit I made?"

"Darling!" And the biscuits! Enjoy them? Why, I couldn't sleep all night for thinking about them!"

EASY TRICKS

An Unfair Game

No. 20

This catch game may be played on a friend two or three times before he "catches on" that it is a swindle in which he cannot win.

Take a handful of matches out of your pocket and, holding them in a bunch, break them in two. Throw the pieces of matches on a table and say to your unsuspecting friend:

"Now, you take one and I'll take one and so on until between us we have all of the pieces. The person getting the last piece wins."

Of course—as this is a swindle—you win. You repeat the trick; this time you take the first match. Again you win.

The secret is simple. No matter how many matches you took out of your pocket, you made the number of pieces even by breaking the matches in two. The number being even, the person taking the second piece will take the last.

While winning, however, you prepared for the repetition of the trick by dropping one of the pieces on the floor. That made the number odd. In that case the man getting the first piece, also gets the last.

The moral is—don't play the other fellow's game.

(Clip this out and paste it, with others of the series, in a scrap-book.)

Queer Uses for Gold.

To the ordinary uses to which gold is put the natives of India add a number that are curious. According to a bullion report of Messrs. Samuel Montagu & Co., gold in the form of thin leaf is swallowed in India for medicinal purposes.

A frequent form of piety is to regild the domes of religious buildings, and such operations can easily absorb £10,000 or more. Sovereigns with a shield on the obverse side are in constant request.

An injury as to the ultimate use of some thousands of pounds revealed the curious fact that a Rajah of queer tastes had imported them to form a centre to each pane the windows of his palace.

As a contrast to the savings of France, which are utilized to promote the trade of the world, those of India are buried or hoarded.

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Snubbed by a Queen.

It seems always to have been true that a pioneer of any invention which is afterwards to become indispensable must suffer misfortune, and perhaps even perish, before his creation can win the recognition it deserves.

This was the case with the steel loom for knitting stockings, invented in the sixteenth century by William Lee.

Lee took his invention to Queen Elizabeth, but she withheld her patronage. Again he improved his machine, so that it would knit silk stockings—the Queen's love of silk hosiery had been one of her chief reasons for disinterest—but again he was disappointed at not receiving a royal grant.

Things were no better under James I., so he went to France, and when success was almost within his grasp at the French Court the assassination of the king balked him again. Broken-hearted, he died, but in the next century Oliver Cromwell granted a patent on his device to the Company of Framework Knitters.

He Kew Why.

Teacher—"Do you know why we call our language the mother tongue?"

Bright child—"Because father never gets a chance to use it."

Inscriptions on animals' bones are the earliest form of Chinese writing.

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Make use of her lavish gifts, and Nature will add to them or develop them in marvellous ways, just as she perfected the human hand, with its strength and its delicate sense of touch, from the same materials as those which make up the elephant's foot or the dog's paw. But if even for a short time her gifts are allowed to go unused, she is very quick to take them back again.

We have lost many of the qualities that our primitive forefathers possessed; they could move their ears, grasp things with their toes, and track down their quarry by means of their noses as dogs do. These powers were no longer needed when man became civilized, and Nature took them away.

In America there are great caves containing pools and lakes inhabited by fish and newt-like creatures, all of which are without eyes. For thousands of years they have lived and bred in the dark, and gradually their useless eyes grew smaller and smaller, until finally they disappeared altogether.

Great birds such as the ostrich and the emu still have wings, but they are so small that they will not serve for flight. All of these birds live on the plains, where spe[illegible] are found to be more advantageous than the power to fly. They ceased to use their wings, and Nature gradually reduced their size. The ostrich of ten thousand years hence will probably have no wings at all.

Many nocturnal creatures — owls and bats, for instance—have almost lost the power of seeing by day. They have developed eyes with widely-opened pupils able to take in the faintest glimpse of light; but what they have gained in one direction they have lost in another: for their large pupils cannot close when they encounter strong sunlight, with the result that these creatures become dazzled and nearly blind on bright days.

Ought to Know.

The young English teacher was trying to make a class of very small children understand a sum in subtraction.

"Now, Esten," she said. "If I had ten shillings in my purse, and went into a shop and bought a hat for five shillings and a pair of gloves for three-and-six, how much should I have left?"

Nobody answered but little Ikey, who inquired in a disgusted tone, "Vy didn't yer count yer change?"

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Woman's Interests

Winter Evening Amusements.

Do you dread the winter like the small boy of my acquaintance who complained the other evening, "I don't like winter 'cause we never have anything to do after supper, only sit around and go to bed long 'fore we're sleepy." Yet isn't winter one of the prettiest times of the year, with its "silvery moon and the crystal snow" that crackles under your feet, and a gentle breeze to remind you that Jack Frost is out that night. Then, too, *it is nice to be able to really get* acquainted with our family after the rush of summer, and the hustle of the harvest time, it is pleasant to enjoy each other during the long winter evenings.

Still, I'm afraid my small boy friend was about right. How many of us plan entertainment for the younger members of the family on the long winter evenings? I can well remember the evenings at home on the old farm when my sister and I were youngsters and the many things mother always thought out for our evenings together. Sometimes there were just apples and pop-corn, but how good it tasted. Or sometimes it was pop-corn balls and home-made crackerjack that mother used to make for us. Other nights there would be stories; and what good stories, too. Then there was the big story book with pictures and all the lovely thrilling stories that we girls revelled in.

About once a week we would all gather around the piano and have a good old-fashioned "sing." How that old home would ring with those old songs. We must not forget the question box. Each one would put a puzzling question in the box and at night we would open it and discuss the questions. This box was often converted into the joke box or the mistake box. Both were fun but we girls liked the mistake box best, for we thought we had improved when we could catch Dad or Mother making a mistake.

Then there were the games. Some times flinch, and all the games you could think of that were played with the flinch cards, sometimes geography cards, authors, or Bible questions. What fun it was to see if we couldn't get more answers than Dad or Mother. Then there was the old society or club that we youngsters formed. Sister was the president and I was secretary, and we were also the entertainment committee. Such stunts as we put Dad and Mother through. And they had to dress up to come to our club, too, and, of course, we had to have some simple refreshments. It would not have been a club without them.

Some nights and these were the best nights to us—we got the folks started, and all engaged in a peanut hunt or a marshmallow hunt. And what sport it was to roast the marshmallows after we had found them, only it was pretty hard to think we could only have a limited number that night.

How we long remember such days. Do we, as mothers of to-day, plan the evenings for our children as we should? How common a sight it is to see father reading the daily paper while mother finishes a little sewing or has a book that she "just must finish," and the young folks are left to amuse themselves as best they can. There are such a lot of things we could do if we only thought so and would take the time to fuss a little. We must remember that the children will only be young once and those early days will be they days they will always look back on with pleasure, to live them over again and again—in their mind.

A simple recipe for the pop-corn balls and crackerjack referred to, is as follows:

Pop-corn balls—Three quarts of pop-corn. After popping shake until all the hard kernels have gone to the bottom of the dish, and lift off the top kernels.

Melt one tablespoon of butter, add a half cup of sugar and one cup of molasses. Boil until it is brittle and will crack when dropped in cold water and just before removing from the fire add a pinch of soda, stir thoroughly, pour over corn and mix. Then form into balls. This makes sixteen balls.

Crackerjack—Have six quarts of pop-corn in a straight-sided pan. Make syrup of half a pint of molasses, half a cup of sugar. Cook until it hardens and will harden when dropped in cold water. Add one-quarter teaspoon of soda dissolved in one teaspoon of boiling water. Let syrup foam up and while foaming drop into it shelled peanuts. Pour whole on corn and pack firmly so it may be cut into bars when cool. As many of the shelled peanuts may be added as the individual desires. This serves about twelve people.

What To Wear.

Why do women need less clothing to protect them from winter's chilling blasts than men? Put it the other way, if you will, and ask why men need so much more clothing than women.

The answer is the same in either case. They don't! And it is still the same if you say girls and boys instead of men and women. In the matter of protection from the weather what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

The fact is, that you can educate any part of the skin to stand exposure to the weather, provided that the exposure is consistently borne and that the total extent of the exposed area is not so great as to waste an excessive amount of the body heat. You must bear in mind that circulation in the lower extremities is difficult and it is always good judgment to dress warmly the feet and ankles.

Since heat production consumes a great deal of energy, and heat waste necessarily lowers vitality, it is not to be supposed that a person who fails to wear sufficient clothing to conserve body heat in extreme weather will have much resistance or endurance.

The young lady who arrays herself in a georgette waist with a V-shaped exposure should be careful to back it with substantial things underneath, otherwise she will not be satisfied with room temperatures that are comfortable to others. She wants the temperature much higher and therefore much drier, the consequence being that she had a great deal of irritation of mucous membranes, the end thereof being catarrh.

The most foolish of all the foolish virgins, however, is the one who dresses in warm underwear six days of the week, and on the evening of the seventh day goes forth in the extremely slight protection of present-day fashions. If the pneumococcus doesn't get her it is because the apparition shocks him cold. The V-neck is all right if you like it and use it constantly, but get good underwear underneath, cover up your arms and shoulders and dress your feet and ankles warmly. You will feel better, be less irritable, more cheerful, more energetic, and better looking.

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