The COW PUNCHER

By Robert J. C. Stead

Author of "Kitchener, and other poems"

Illustrations by Frank Mayer

"WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?"

Synopsis—David Elden, son of a drunken, shiftless rancheman, almost a maverick of the foothills, is breaking bottles with his pistol from his running cayuse when the first automobile he has ever seen arrives and tips over, breaking the leg of Doctor Hardy but not injuring his beautiful daughter Irene. Dave rescues the injured man and brings a doctor from 40 miles away. Irene takes charge of the housekeeping. Dave and Irene take many rides together and during her father's enforced stay they get well acquainted.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

For the first time he looked her straight in the face. His dark eyes met her gray ones and demanded truth. "Irene," he said, "do you mean that?"

"Sure I do," she answered. "College courses, and all that kind of thing, they're good stuff, all right, but they make some awful nice boys—real live boys, you know—into some awful dead ones. My father says about the best education is to learn to live within your income, pay your debts and give the other fellow a chance to do the same. They don't all learn that at college. Then there's the things you do, just like you were born to it, that they couldn't do to save their lives. Why, I've seen you smash six bottles at a stretch, you going full gallop and whooping and shooting so we could hardly tell which was which. And ride—you could make more money riding for city people to look at than most of those learned fellows, with letters after their names like the tail of a kite, will ever see. But I wouldn't like you to make it that way. There are more useful things to do."

He was comforted by this speech, but he referred to his accomplishments modestly. "Ridin' an' shootin' ain't nothin'," he said.

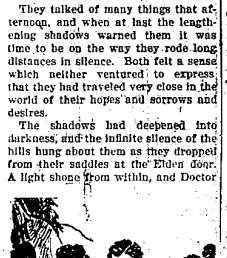
"I'm not so sure," she answered. "Father says the days is coming when our country will want men who can shoot and ride more than it will want lawyers and professors."

"Well, when it does it can call on me," he said, and there was the pride in his voice which comes to a boy who feels that in some way he can take a man's place in the world. "Them is two things I sure can do."

Years later she was to think of her remark and his answer, consecrated then in clean red blood.

They talked of many things that afternoon, and when at last the lengthening shadows warned them it was time to be on the way they rode long distances in silence. Both felt a sense which neither ventured to express that they had traveled very close in the world of their hopes and sorrows and desires.

The shadows had deepened into darkness, and the infinite silence of the hills hung about them as they dropped from their saddles at the Elden door. A light shone from within, and Doctor



For the First Time He Looked Her Straight in the Face.

Hardy, who was now able to move about with the aid of a home-made crutch, could be seen setting the table, while Mr. Elden stirred a composition on the stove. They chatted as they worked, and there was something of the joy of little children in their companionship. The young folks watched for a moment through the window, and in Dave's heart some long-forgotten emotion moved momentarily at the sight of the good-fellowship prevailing in the old house. Irene, too, was thinking; glimpses of her own buttered home, and then this background of primal simplicity, where the old cowman cooked the meals and the famous specialist set the plates on the bare board table, and then back of it all her mother, sedate and correct, and very much shocked over this mingling of the classes.

"Well, you youngsters must have this country pretty well explored," said Doctor Hardy, as they entered the house. "Where was it today—the prairies, the foothills or the real fellows behind?"

"The canyon up the river," said Irene, drawing off her sweater. "What's the eats? Goo! I'm hungry! Getting pretty supple, Daddykins, aren't you?"

"Yes, an' I'm sorry for it, miss," said the old rancher, "not wishin' him any harm, or you, neither. We was jus' talkin' it over, an' your father thinks he's spry enough for the road again. Ain't ever goin' to be like it used to be after he's gone, an' you."

"We'll be sorry to go," said the doctor. "That's what I've been saying all day, and thinking, too. If misfortunes can be lucky, ours was one of that kind. I don't know when I've enjoyed a holiday so much. What do you say, girl?" he asked, as he rested an arm on her round, firm shoulder and looked with fatherly fondness into the fine brown of her face.

"I've never known anything like it," she answered. "It's wonderful. It's life." Then with a sudden little scream she exclaimed: "Oh, daddy, why can't you sell your practice and buy a ranch? Wouldn't that be wonderful?"

"Your mother might not see it that way," he replied and her eyes fell.

Yes, that was the obstacle. She would have to go back to the city and talk by rule, and dress by rule, and behave by rule, and be correct.

"It's been a good time," the doctor continued, when they had commenced supper, "but I've already overstayed my holiday. I feel I can travel now, and my leg will be pretty strong by the time I am back east. If Dave will oblige us by going to town tomorrow and bringing back some one who can drive a car, we will be able to start the following morning. I will just take the car to town, and either sell it there or ship it."

The following morning found Dave early on the trail, leading a saddled horse by his side. The hours were leaden for the girl all that day and, looking into the future, she saw the specter of her life shadowed down the years by an unutterable loneliness. How could she ever drop it all—all this wild freedom, this boundless health, this great outdoors, this life, life—how could she drop it all and go back into the little circle where convention fenced out the tiniest alien streamlet, although the circle itself might lie deep in mire? And how would she give up this boy who had grown so imperceptibly but so intimately into the very soul of her being—give him up with all his strength and virility and, yes, and coarseness, if you will, but sincerity, too—an essential man, as God made him—in exchange for a machine-made counterfeit with the stamp of Society? Deeply did she ponder these questions, and as the day wore on she found herself possessed of a steadily growing determination that she would not follow the beaten trail, let the by-paths lead where they might.

Darkness, save for a white moon, had settled over the foothills when the boy returned with another young man. The stranger ate a ravenous supper, but was not too occupied to essay conversation with Irene. He chose to call her cook.

"Swell pancakes, cook," was his opening remark. "Can you find another for yours truly?"

She refilled his plate without answer.

"Used to know a girl mighty like you," he went on. "Waitress in the Royal Edward. Gee! but she was swell! A pippin! Class? Say, she had 'em all guessing. And me guessing myself for a while. But just for a while." He voiced these remarks with an air of intense self-approval more offensive than the words.

Irene felt the color rise about her neck and cheeks and run like an overflowing stream into her ears and about her hair. It was evident that, for a second time, Dave had chosen to say nothing to strangers about her presence at the ranch. Her father and Mr. Elden were in Dave's room; Dave had stopped eating, and she saw the veins rising in his clenched fists. But the challenge was to her, and she would accept it; she felt no need of his protection.

"Fill your stomach," she said, passing more pancakes; "your head is hopeless."

He attempted a laugh, but the meal was finished in silence. The stranger lit a cigarette and Irene went to the door with Dave.

"Come for a walk," he whispered. "The horses are tired, so let's walk. . . . It's our last chance."

She ran for her sweater and rejoined him in a moment. They walked in silence down a path through the fragrant trees, but Dave turned from time to time to catch a glimpse of her face, white and fine as ivory in the soft light. He had much to say, but he was tongue-tied under the spell of her beauty.

"You squelched him, all right," he broke out, at length.

"Just in time, too, I think," she replied. "I was watching your hands."

He smiled a quiet but very confident smile. "Reenie," he said, "that fellow makes me sick. All the way out he talked about girls. He's a city chap an' wears a white collar, but he ain't fit to spell your name. Another minute an' I'd 'a' had 'im by the neck." He seized a spruce limb that stuck across their path. It was the size of a stout stick, but he snapped it with a turn of his wrist. It was very tough; it oozed sticky stuff where he broke it. "His neck," he said, between his teeth, "jus' like that."

They reached an open space. Something black—or was it red?—lay on the ground. Dave bent over it a moment, then looked up to her white, clear face, white and clearer than ever since witnessing the strength of his hate.

"It's a calf," he said, as calmly as he could. "Half et up. Wolves, I guess."

"The poor, poor thing!" she breathed. "The poor, innocent thing! Why did it have to die?"

"It's always the innocent things 'at suffers," he answered.

"Always the innocent things," she repeated mechanically. "Always—" She sprang to her feet and faced him. "Then what about the justice of God?" she demanded.

"I don't know nothin' about the justice of God," he answered bitterly. "All I know is the crittur 'at can't run gets caught."

There was a long pause. "It doesn't seem right," she said at length.

"It ain't right," he agreed. "But I guess it's life. I see it here on the prairies with every livin' thing. I guess I was like that, some. I've been caught. I guess a baby ain't responsible for anything, is it? I didn't pick my father or my mother, did I? But I got to bear it."

There was something near a break in his voice on the last words. She felt she must speak.

"I think your father is a wonderful old man," she said, "and your mother must have been wonderful, too. You should be proud of them both."

"Reenie, do you mean that?" he demanded. His eyes were looking straight into hers.

"Absolutely," she answered. "Absolutely I mean it."

"Then I'm goin' to say some more things to you," he went on rapidly. "Things 'at I didn't know whether to say or not, but now they've got to be said, whatever happens. Reenie, I haven't ever been to school or learned lots of things I should 'a' learned, but I ain't a fool, neither. I didn't learn to break all those bottles in a day. Well, I can learn other things, too, an' I will, if only it will take me across. I'm goin' to leave this old ranch, some way, jus' as soon as it can be arranged. I'm goin' to town an' work. I'm strong; I can get pretty good wages. I've been thinkin' it all over, an' was askin' some questions in town today. I can work days an' go to school nights. An' I'll do it—if it'll get me across. You know what I mean. I ain't askin' no pledges, Reenie, but what's the chance? I know I don't talk right, and I don't eat right—you tried not to notice but you couldn't help—but, Reenie, I think right, an' I guess with a girl like you that counts more than eatin' and talkin'."

She had thought she could say yes or no to any question he could ask, but as he poured forth these plain, passionate words she found herself enveloped in a flame that found no expression in speech. She had no words. She was glad when he went on:

"I know I'm only a boy an' you're only a girl. That's why I don't ask no pledge. I leave you free, only I want you to stay free until I have my chance. Will you promise that?"

She tried to pull herself together. "You know I've had a good time with you, Dave," she said, "and I've gone with you everywhere, like I would not have gone with any other boy I ever knew, and I've talked and let you talk about things I never talked about before, and I believe you're true and clean and—and—"

"Yes," he said. "What's your answer?"

"I know you're true and clean," she repeated. "Come to me—like that—when I'm a woman and you're a man, and then—then we'll know."

He was tall and straight, and his shadow fell across her face, as though

"Reenie," He Said, "Kiss Me."

even the moon must not see. "Reenie," he said, "kiss me."

For one moment she thought of her mother. She knew she stood at the parting of the ways; that all life for her was being molded in that moment. Then she put both arms about his neck and drew his lips to her.

Dave goes to town to seek his fortune.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

It's the Calm Ones Who Get Fat.

"So you married that Miss Meek, I remember her well, a quiet, shrinking sort of girl."

"Nothing shrinking about her; she's twice the size she used to be."—Boston Transcript.

PUBLIC HIGHWAYS

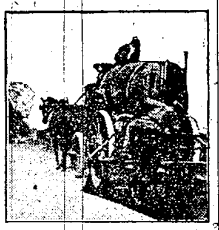
ENTRANCE ROADS FOR FARMS

Engineers of Bureau of Public Roads Give Advice on Application of Bituminous Material.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Owners of large farms and rural estates seeking a more satisfactory type of entrance road have applied to the bureau of public roads of the United States department of agriculture for advice regarding the application of bituminous material on main entrance and much-traveled farm lanes.

The bureau's engineers point out that such applications may be made successfully on any farm road which has already been constructed of stone, gravel, or other similar material, and is in a thoroughly compacted and reasonably smooth condition. A coal-tar preparation applied cold, or an asphaltic oil, can be used and if applied by the farm employees, the cost should not exceed seven or eight cents a square yard for materials. The compacted gravel or stone road should be thoroughly cleaned of dust and the bitumen applied with ordinary sprinkling pots from which the perforated nozzle has been removed and the spout carefully flattened into a symmetrical rectangular opening about one-quarter



Surface Treatment of Macadam Road With Bituminous Material and Stone Chips.

of an inch wide, so that the material may be poured in a broad, flat stream. If a large amount of work is to be done, a specially designed pouring can may be purchased of dealers in road equipment. Care should be taken to have an even distribution, and the quantity applied should be approximately one-half gallon to a square yard of road surface. After applying the bituminous material, clean gravel or stone chips should be spread evenly over the surface, and if possible, rolled with a lawn or field roller. Where gravel or chips are not available, clean, coarse sand will serve as covering material. It should be spread in sufficient quantity to prevent the bituminous material from adhering to tires of passing vehicles. Attention is called to the fact that this treatment should not be made where drainage from the stables or barns will flow over it. Where mudholes are likely to form around hitching posts or at stable entrances, if a more durable pavement is desired, a section of concrete slab should be laid.

ROAD OUT OF SOLID GRANITE

Will Lead From Estes Park to Glen Lake, Connecting With Lincoln Highway.

In the Rocky mountains, Colorado, aided by the federal government, is building eight miles of road out of solid granite. The road, which will lead from Estes Park in the Rockies to Glen Lake, connecting with the Lincoln highway and forming a part of the transcontinental highway, will bring Switzerland to America. The road will cost, when completed, more than $25,000 a mile.

BIG ROAD PROGRAM PLANNED

Alabama to Issue $25,000,000 in Bonds to Match Federal Appropriation for Highways.

Plans to issue $25,000,000 in bonds to match a similar federal appropriation for building roads in Alabama were set on foot at a meeting of the Alabama Highway Improvement association. The project includes a three-mill levy by counties for maintenance. A constitutional amendment to authorize this project will be asked of the next legislature.

Country's Urgent Necessity.

The most urgent necessity of our country in the immediate future is good roads, permanent roads that can be used 12 months in each year.

Bond Issues Voted.

Bond issues aggregating many millions of dollars for new highway construction have been voted by more than a score of states this year.

Prepare for Next Year.

Now is the time to get ready for next year.

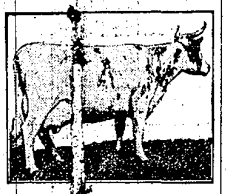
DAIRY

OUSTING S. BOARDER COWS

Iowa Dairyman Cuts Down on Feed Cost by Eliminating Unprofitable Animals in Herd.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

A good example of what cow-testing associations are doing to help dairymen cull unprofitable milk producers is shown in the experience of an Iowa dairyman who reports that through the cow-testing association he learned that one cow was paying him $2.40 for each dollar's worth of feed, while another returned only 58 cents. This dairyman lost no time in selling the poor cow and five others which showed by test that they were not paying for the feed they consumed. This year he will be able to produce milk at less



High-Producing Cows Pay for Their Keep.

cost, thus increasing his profits. He writes, "I have cut down on the feed cost by eliminating the boarders, and can still further reduce it by using more clover and alfalfa than was available last year."

TESTS SHOW GERMS IN MILK

Multiplication of Bacteria Causes Rapid Deterioration—Value for Food Lessened.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Extensive experiments conducted at the government farm, Beltsville, Md., show that milk drawn into a sterile pail from dirty cows contained an average of 32,057 bacteria per cubic centimeter, while milk drawn from clean cows whose udders and teats were washed immediately previous to milking had a content of only 4,947 germs per cubic centimeter. These tests were made immediately after milking. Naturally, on standing the milk with the greatest number of bacteria would deteriorate most rapidly, due to the multiplication of the germs. Accordingly its value as a human food product would be greatly reduced, while its introduction on the city market would be carefully scrutinized, and in some cases punished by the health authorities.

Pride should cause every dairyman to maintain his cows in an attractive, cleanly and sanitary condition every day in the year. In a way the appearance of the cow is an accurate measure of the owner. In the same degree that neglected fences, overrun fence rows, tumble-down buildings and unhoused machinery typify the shiftless, never-do-well farmer, dairy cows which are dirty indicate the milk farmer who does not safeguard consumers against contaminated milk.

PROTECTION FOR DAIRY COW

Exposure to Cold Rains Is Often More Injurious Than Colder Weather of Winter.

The dairy cow often suffers the most from exposure to the weather before real winter has begun. After steady cold comes the cow is generally stabled. Exposure to cold rains in November is often more injurious to the animal than the colder but dry weather later in the winter.

The dairy cow is not like the fat steer, protected from cold by a layer of fat. As a result bad weather causes a big drop in milk production. So long as the weather is dry it is just as well to leave the cow outside nights, but every cold rain should find her protected.

The main thing is to have tight walls so there is no draft or wind and a good roof. Care should be taken in arranging the stalls, in the form of a platform of the right length and a gutter of sufficient depth to hold the manure. The cleanliness of the milk depends to a considerable extent upon having the barn built so the cow will keep herself clean.—Clemson College Bulletin.

FOUNDATION FOR DAIRY HERD

Young Calves From Good Cows Are Satisfactory for Start, Say Government Specialists.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

It is not always necessary to purchase all mature animals in establishing a herd. Young calves from good dairy cows are a satisfactory foundation for starting a dairy herd, in the opinion of specialists. Ordinarily the method advocated is to grade up common cows with a purebred bull, requiring a number of years of patient selection and breeding—a period sometimes discouraging to an energetic dairyman. Frequently this causes farmers who want results too quickly to change breeds.

900 FLU CASES REPORTED TO HEALTH SERVICE

Washington dispatches state that there were over 900 flu cases reported to the public health service last week.

This is an increase over the previous week, and as cold weather draws near authorities are worried.

A recent public health report says: "City officials, state and city boards of health should be prepared in event of an recurrence of the flu."

Even if one recovers from the flu, the after effects are terrible. The only sane thing to do is to prevent the flu. Influenza can be prevented; last year's results prove that. It is important that a good germicide should be used frequently. Turpo is an effective germicide, combining the old-fashioned remedies of turpentine (which has for years been known as the best home germicide), camphor-menthol and pure mineral base. As a preventive for flu, Turpo has been a pronounced success.

Snuff a little Turpo up the nostrils several times a day, and the Flu germs will have little chance of getting a lodging and breeding place. Many physicians and hospitals use and recommend Turpo.

The fact that more than nine hundred cases of influenza have been reported to the United States Health Service makes it important that you prepare now. Buy a thirty-cent jar of Turpo of your druggist now while he has a supply on hand, and use as directed.

If in spite of all precautions influenza develops, go to bed and summon a physician. Influenza is a serious malady, and requires the best medical attention.—Adv.

Liked It.

Four-year-old Johnnie was in the habit of annoying his neighbor by standing on the register and shuffling his feet. One day the neighbor, in his desperation, grabbed Johnnie and lifted him roughly from the register, whereupon Johnnie exclaimed: "Do it again, doctor. I thought I was flying."

Some Kickers.

"Some men pride themselves on being great kickers," remarked the Observer of Events and Things, "and they never will concede that the mules are their superiors."

Neglected Kidneys Kill Thousands Yearly.

Get Quick Relief Before It's Too Late—Doan's Kidney Pills—Favorite For Two Generations.

Few people are awake to the dangers of diseased Kidneys. Statistics show that deaths from Bright's Disease and other kidney troubles have increased over 50% in last few years. Most of us delay treatment—we get a pain in the back, loins and let it go. Meanwhile, the malady tightens its grip until finally Bright's Disease, then hospital and doctor bills.

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If your druggist is sold out, send 60c in stamps with this paper's name to Dodd's Medicine Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

SELDOM SEE a big knee like this, but your horse may have a bunch or bruise on his ankle, hock, stifle, knee or throat.

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will clean it off without laying up the horse. No blister, no hair gone. Concentrated—only a few drops required at an application. $2.50 per bottle delivered. Describe your case for special instructions, and Book 8 K free. ABSORBINE, JR., the antiseptic liniment for mankind, reduces Painful Swellings, Enlarged Glands, Wens, Bruises, Varicose Veins; allays Pain and inflammation. Price $1.25 a bottle at druggists or delivered. Liberal trial bottle postpaid for 30c.
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is used by entire families because it is purely vegetable, does the work and costs very little.

Why pay high prices for Liver and Bowel remedies when none are better than Dr. Carter's K. and B. tea, which is purely vegetable, can be brewed at home, and a small package will last a long time.

Thousands of old people will tell you they have been drinking it for years, and after the liver and bowels have been put in fine condition in a few days by a before bedtime cup; that only an occasional cup is afterwards necessary to keep one feeling fit and fine.

People who drink a cup of Dr. Carter's K. and B. Tea once in a while, seldom, if ever, have any bilious attacks, sick headache or sallow skin. It's good for boys and girls, especially those who are peevish and fretful. Druggists have been selling it for many years.
S. C. Wells & Co., Le Roy, N. Y.

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