The COW PUNCHER

By Robert J.C.Stead

Author of "Kitchener, and other poems"

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

—11—

"Real estate is the only subject I would trust him on," she continued. "I must say, 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.

"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 by the window.

"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.

"Bert," he continued, "did it ever occur to you that this thing must have an end—that we can't go on forever 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. But there was neither occasion nor 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 some time be repaid."

"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."

"Why me particularly? I am only one of the great public. Why don't you give your conclusions to the world? Now that you see the reaction setting in doesn't honesty suggest what your course should be?"

There was reproach in her voice, Dave thought, rather than bitterness.

He spread out his hands. "What's the use? The harm is done. To predict a collapse would be to precipitate a panic. It 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 motorcars—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?"

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 you. You are too good a sport. But there will be lots of whining in the coming months." Manlike, it did not occur to Dave that in that moment the girl had bidden goodby to her savings of a dozen years and had merely looked up and said, "Forgive me, Dave, I didn't mean to whine."

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

"I can't go horseback 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 shall 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. Presently the traffic thinned, and the car hummed through long residential avenues of comfortable homes. 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 keen for conversation, they pulled up on the brow of a hill. 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.

Suddenly, from a sharp bend behind in the road, flashed the lights of an approaching car. Dave was able to switch his own lights on again only in time to avoid a collision. The oncoming car lurched and passed by furiously, but not before Dave had recognized Conward as the driver. Back on its trail of dust floated the ribald notes of half-intoxicated women.

"Close enough," said Dave when the dust had settled. "Well, let us jog back home."

They took the return trip leisurely, drinking in the glories of the night and allowing time for the play of conversation. Bert Morrison was a good conversationalist. Her points of interest were almost infinite. And they were back among the street lights before they knew.

"Oh, I almost forgot," Bert said, as they parted, as though she really had forgotten. "I was at a reception today when a beautiful woman asked for you—asked me if I had ever heard of Mr. David Elden."

"What, Dave Elden, the millionaire? I said. 'Everybody knows him. He's the head of the town, or could be if he wanted to.' Oh, I gave you a good name, Dave."

"Thanks, Bert. That was decent. Who was she?"

"She said her name was Irene Hardy."

CHAPTER VIII.

Upon the return of Irene Hardy to the East it had slowly become apparent to her mother that things were not as they once had been. It seemed as though she had left part of her nature behind—had outgrown it, perhaps—and had created about herself an atmosphere of reserve foreign to her earlier life. It seemed as though the loneliness of the great plains had settled upon her.

"Whatever has come over Irene?" said Mrs. Hardy to the doctor one evening. "She hasn't been the same since she came home. I should not have let her go west alone."

The doctor looked up mildly from his paper. It was the custom of the doctor to look up mildly when Mrs. Hardy made a statement demanding some form of recognition. From the wide initiation into domestic affairs which his profession had given him Doctor Hardy had long since entirely ceased to look for the absolute in woman. He had never looked for it in man. He realized that in Mrs. Hardy he did not possess a perfect mate, but he was equally convinced that in no other woman would he have found a perfect mate, and he accepted his lot with the philosophy of his sixty years. So instead of reminding his wife that Irene had not been alone when she went west he remarked very mildly that the girl was growing older.

Mrs. Hardy found in his remark occasion to lay down the book she had been holding and to sit upright in a rigidity of intense disapproval. Doctor Hardy was aware that this was entirely a theatrical attitude, assumed for the purpose of imposing upon him a proper humility. He had experienced it many times.

"Doctor Hardy," said his wife after the lapse of an appropriate period, "do you consider that an intelligent remark?"

"It has the advantage of truthfulness," returned the doctor complacently. "It is susceptible of demonstration."

"I should think this is a matter of sufficient interest to the family to be discussed seriously," retorted Mrs. Hardy, who had an unfortunate habit of becoming exasperated by her husband's good humor. "Irene is our only child, and before your very eyes you see her—you see her— Do you know, I begin—I really begin to suspect that she's in love."

It was Doctor Hardy's turn to sit upright. "Nonsense!" he said. "Why should she be in love?" It is the unfortunate limitation of the philosopher that he so often leaves irrational behavior out of the reckoning. "She is only a child."

"She will be eighteen presently. And why shouldn't she be in love? And the question is—who? That is for you to answer. Who did she meet?"

"She met no one with me. My accident left me to enjoy my holiday as best I could at a ranch deep in the foothills, and Reenie stayed with me there. There was no one else—"

"No one? No ranchmen, cowboys—cow punchers—I think I have heard"—with nice disdain.

"No. Only young Elden—"

"Only? Who is this young Elden?"

"But he is just a boy. Just the son of the old rancher of whom I have told you."

"Exactly. And Irene is just a girl. Doctor Hardy, you are all very well with your fevers and your chills, but you can't diagnose a love case worth a cent. What about this young Elden? Did Irene see much of him?"

The doctor spread his hands. "Do you realize that there were four of us at that ranch—four only, and no one else for miles? How could she help seeing him?"

"And you permitted it?"

"I was on my back with a broken leg. We were guests at their home. They were good Samaritans to us. I couldn't chaperon her. And besides they don't do things that way in that country. You don't understand. It's altogether different."

"Andrew," said Mrs. Hardy, leaning forward, and the word was ominous, for she used his Christian name only in moments of crisis, "was Irene ever with this young man—alone?"

The doctor arose to his feet and trod heavily upon the rich carpetings. "I told you you don't understand," he protested. "The West is not the East. Everything is different—"

"I suppose human nature is different," she interrupted meaningly. Then her head fell upon the table and her hands went up about her hair. It had been brown hair once but was now thin and streaked with gray. "Oh, Andrew," she wept, "we are ruined! That we should ever have come to this!"

It was now Doctor Hardy's turn to be exasperated. There was one thing his philosophy could not endure. That was a person who was not and who would not be philosophical. Mrs. Hardy was not and would not be philosophical.

"This is all nonsense!" said the doctor, impatiently. "There is nothing to it, anyway. The girl had to have some company. What if they did ride together? What—"

"They rode together? Alone?"

"They had their horses along," said the doctor, whose impatience had made way for sarcasm.

"You are mocking me. In this hour of shame you are making jests. Call Irene."

The girl was summoned. Her fine face had lost some of its brownness, and the eyes seemed deeper and slower, but she was still a vision of grace and beauty as she stood in response to their call, framed in the curtains of an archway. Her quick sense caught the tense atmosphere, and she came forward with parted lips and extended fingers.

"Yes?" she said. "What is wrong? Can I help?"

"Your father has confessed," said Mrs. Hardy, trying hard to speak with judicial calm. "Now tell us about your relations with this young Elden, this cow puncher. Let us know the worst."

Irene's eyes flew from her mother to her father's face, and there they caught something that restored their calm.

"There was no worst," she said with a ripple of laughter, "but there was a good deal of best. Shall I tell you the best?"

"Irene," said her mother severely, "did you permit that young man to make love to you?"

"I did not give him permission, if that answers you, because he didn't ask it."

Mrs. Hardy had risen. "Andrew, you hear that? She confesses. It's dreadful! Horrible! What will everybody say?"

"No worse than you have said, I'll be bound," put in the doctor.

"Yes, take her part. What care you for the family name?"

"I have a right to speak for the family name," said the doctor firmly. "It was mine before it was yours. I cannot see that the family name has been compromised in the slightest degree. This is Irene's first adventure. It will pass away. And even if it does not—he is a manly boy."

Mrs. Hardy surveyed her husband hopelessly, then turned to Irene. "Have you made any promises?"

"Only that I wouldn't make any promises until he had his chance. That seemed fair."

"I suppose you are receiving letters from him?"

"No."

"Why doesn't he write?"

For the first time Irene's eyes fell and the color mounted richer in her cheeks. She had to confess now, not for herself but for him.

"He can't write," she said.

"Merciful heavens!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardy, collapsing into a chair. . . . "Andrew, bring me a stimulant."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Beating the Train.

"Now, Thomas," said the foreman of the construction gang to a green hand who had just been put on the job, "keep your eyes open. When you see a train coming throw down your tools and jump off the track. Run like blazes!" "Sure!" said Thomas, and began to swing his pick. In a few minutes the Empire State Express came whiring along. Thomas threw down his pick and started up the track ahead of the train as fast as he could. The train overtook him and tossed him into a ditch. Badly shaken up, he was taken to the hospital, where the foreman visited him. "You blithering idiot!" said the foreman, "didn't I tell you to take care and get out of the way? Why didn't you run up the side of the hill?" "Up the side of the hill, is it, sor?" said Thomas through the bandages on his face. "Up the side of the hill? By the powers, I can't bate it on the level, let alone runnin' up hill."

First Safety Bicycles.

The first of the safety bicycles was put on the market in 1880. In this the high front wheel was reduced and the rear wheel was about two-thirds the height of the front one. The machines with wheels of the same size appeared in 1885. Bicycling began to be popular about 1891, and the "craze" reached its height about 1895, when wheels had become low enough in price to be within the means of the multitude.

Explained.

"Wonder why woman is so perverse and contrary." "You must remember that she was made out of one of the crookedest parts of man."

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

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LESSON FOR JANUARY 25

PETER STANDS UP FOR TRUTH AND HONESTY.

LESSON TEXT—Acts 5:1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT—Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.—Prov. 12:22.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL—Ex. 20:16; Prov. 11:1; Matt. 6: 2-4; Gal. 6:7, 8; Eph. 4:15, 25, 26.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Telling the Truth.

JUNIOR TOPIC—Two Disciples and What Became of Them.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Folly and Sinfulness of Lying.

In this lesson we see the new community now called "the church" (v. 11) vindicated. In the boldness of Peter and John we see that the break with Judaism has come—the authority of the Sanhedrin is repudiated with the determination on the part of the disciples to be led by the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that the body now gets the name "church." Since the break has come it must be shown to be a holy body; it must have recognition as being sacred. The sanctity of the tabernacle is transferred to the new body, which is God's dwelling place (Eph. 2:19-22). The church itself, as well as the people about, did not know this until God's judgment burst forth.

I. Characteristics of the Primitive Church (4:31-35).

1. It was a praying church (v. 31). For every want and every need they betook themselves to God in prayer.

2. It was a Spirit-filled church (v. 31). A praying church is a Spirit-filled church. The Spirit is given in answer to prayer (Luke 11:13).

3. It was a church which had great boldness in preaching the Word of God (v. 31). The minister in a Spirit-filled church will not offer an apology for the Bible, but will fearlessly preach it.

4. It was a united church (v. 32). They were "of one heart and one soul."

5. It was a charitable and generous church (v. 32). As needs arose supplies were given from a common fund.

6. Its ministers had a powerful testimony (v. 33).

7. It was a church whose membership exhibited unblemished characters (v. 33). For "great grace was upon them all."

II. The Sin of Ananias and Sapphira (vv. 1-11).

1. Its occasion (vv. 1, 2). This was their hypocritical imitation of the generous act of Barnabas (4:36, 37). Because of the peculiar distress of the early church when the open rupture was made with Judaism, the members for a time had a "community of goods." This was not universal nor permanent; some continued to own their own homes, as for example John Mark's mother, who used her home in which to entertain Christians. Ananias kept back a part of the money received for his land while pretending to have brought it all. His wife was a partner in it. They wanted the honor of generosity without paying the price.

2. The judgment (vv. 3-10). Ananias allowed satan to fill his heart and lied to the Holy Ghost in keeping back a part of the price of the land. It was most likely an accepted lie. They were not under obligation to sell their land, or having sold it, to bring any of the money and place it in the common fund. Peter declared that they were absolutely free to do as they pleased with it. Love of praise is causing many today to make the same dreadful mistake. People are walking in the way of Ananias and Sapphira when they make a profession of religion for temporal gain and pleasure; or even preaching sermons not their own. Frequently men preach the sermons of Moody and Spurgeon without giving credit. Physical death was visited upon Ananias and Sapphira for their sins.

III. The Effect (vv. 11-16).

1. Great fear came upon the church and upon all who heard of these things (v. 11). Irreverence is an outstanding sin of this age. The church should be recognized as holy—the very dwelling place of the Most High God.

2. Multitudes of men and women were added to the Lord (v. 14). This caused the fame of Peter to be spread far and wide, so that the people were anxious to come under his shadow. Were the holiness of the body of Christ recognized, there would be many coming for pardon and salvation.

3. The hypocrites did not dare to join (v. 13). It is interesting to note that this vindication of the holiness of the church did not deter any but hypocrites from joining it. Nothing unhallowed nor any unregenerate person has a place in the church. This applies to our offerings as well as to our person.

Daily Prayer.

Oh Lord, we thank thee that men turn to thee; the measure of their need is the measure of thy supply. Let thy spirit dwell in our spirits, and then all shall be well within and peaceful without. We pray thee to give us a fuller and firmer, and more continual, and more vigorous and efficacious confidence in thyself. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Character Building.

Life is mainly an opportunity for character building and testing.

GOOD ROADS

ROADS SHOW AT HOT SPRINGS

Active Preparations and Arrangement of Programs Have Commenced—Other Meetings.

The eighth annual convention of the United States Good Roads association, also the eighth annual good roads show, will be held in Hot Springs, Ark., April 12 to 17, 1920. Already active preparations and arrangement of the programs have commenced. J. A. Rountree, director general of the United States Good Roads association, has been invited to Hot Springs, Ark., for the purpose of consulting with the Business Men's league, the mayor, the various civic organizations and citizens in general, to discuss the program and details of arranging good roads week in Hot Springs, Ark., next April.

It is proposed to make good roads week the greatest gathering of good roads boosters that have ever assembled in this country. Delegates will be in attendance from every state in the Union. Already more than forty governors have accepted life membership in the organization and are vice presidents of the same.

In connection with the organization the annual meeting of the Bankhead Highway, which is promoting a national highway from Washington to San Diego, Cal., the Albert Pike National Highway, which is promoting a highway from Pikes Peak to Kansas City, and a number of good roads organizations will hold meetings during good roads week in April.

One of the features of the convention will be a display of road machinery, road material, trucks, tractors and automobiles. Already six governors have notified Director General Rountree of their acceptance, and will head a large delegation from their respective states. It is expected to have at least twenty governors in attendance at this convention. Senator John H. Bankhead, who is president of the United States Good Roads association and author of the Bankhead federal aid bill of $85,000,000 annually for the building of good roads throughout the country, is quite enthusiastic about this meeting and gives assurance that the governors will send heads of the various departments to the meeting.

PROVE VALUE OF GOOD ROADS

Cotton Growers Quick to Realize Commercial Worth of Improved Highways in Hauling.

Southern cotton growers have been quick to realize the commercial value of good roads. Money invested in scientific road building has well spent, as witness the illustration, where a single team is hauling 12 bales, about 6,000 pounds, to market. Under former

The Way the Southern Grower Hauls Cotton in These Days of Good Roads—In the Good Old Days One Bale Was the Limit.

conditions, with mud hub deep the year around, the same team could haul but one bale, and that only half as fast.—Popular Mechanics Magazine.

PROGRESS IN FEDERAL ROADS

Total Mileage of Projects Approved in August Shows Increase Over Month of July.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

An increase for August compared with July in the total mileage of federal aid project statements approved by the secretary of agriculture is shown in the latest report prepared by the bureau of public roads, the total for August being 1,246.92 miles as against 1,168.66 miles for July. The 125 project statements approved in August involved improvement at an estimated total cost of $18,238,303.19, on which federal aid in the amount of $7,171,794.94 was requested. The 148 project statements approved in July involved improvement of highways at a total estimated cost of $19,012,480.85, on which federal aid to the amount of $8,461,571.58 was requested.

Automobile Helped Roads.

Since the coming of the automobile the American roads have been much improved in many sections of the country.

Road Drag Quite Useful.

The road drag will not build a road but it will keep the road in shape after building.

New Science Developing.

Road building is developing a new science that calls for the highest engineering skill.

Sure Relief

BELL-ANS FOR INDIGESTION 25 CENTS

6 BELL-ANS Hot water Sure Relief

BELL-ANS FOR INDIGESTION

KILLS PAIN IN 5 MINUTES

Agony of Rheumatism and Gout, Neuralgia, Lumbago, Chest Colds and Sore Throat Ended in Half the Time it Takes Other Remedies.

Mustarine won't blister—it is always ready for use—it's grandmother's old-fashioned mustard plaster with other up-to-date pain killers added.

The best and quickest remedy in the world for lameness, sore muscles, stiff neck, cramps in leg, earache, backache, headache and toothache.

Begg's Mustarine—ask for it by name. Is made of real, honest, yellow mustard—not cheap substitutes. Use it freely to draw the pain from those sore feet—it's great for chilblains, too, and for frosted feet. Ask for and get Mustarine always in the yellow box.

S. C. Wells & Co., Le Roy, N. Y.

STOPS PAIN MUSTARINE CANNOT BLISTER

UNCLE SAM a SCRAP chew in PLUG form MOIST & FRESH

Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co.

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Tonbridge Co-operative Pig-Breeding (Limited), an organization started when the submarine menace became acute, has been wound up, the shareholders having received back their capital, with 47½ per cent.—London Mail.

ASPIRIN INTRODUCED BY "BAYER" IN 1900

Look for name "Bayer" on the tablets, then you need never worry.

If you want the true, world-famous Aspirin, as prescribed by physicians for over eighteen years, you must ask for "Bayer Tablets of Aspirin."

The "Bayer Cross" is stamped on each tablet and appears on each package for your protection against imitations.

In each package of "Bayer Tablets of Aspirin" are safe and proper directions for Colds, Headache, Neuralgia, Toothache, Earache, Rheumatism, Lumbago, Neuritis, and for Pain in general.

Handy tin boxes containing 12 tablets cost but a few cents. Druggists also sell larger "Bayer" packages. Aspirin is the trade mark of Bayer Manufacture of Monoaceticacidester of Salicylicacid.—Adv.

No Home for Leonidas.

"Does your husband stay home nights?"

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Meewton. "I insist on his going with me to all the meetings I attend."

GREEN'S AUGUST FLOWER.

Constipation invites other troubles which come speedily unless quickly checked and overcome by Green's August Flower which is a gentle laxative, regulates digestion both in stomach and intestines, cleans and sweetens the stomach and alimentary canal, stimulates the liver to secrete the bile and impurities from the blood. It is a sovereign remedy used in many thousands of households all over the civilized world for more than half a century by those who have suffered with indigestion, nervous dyspepsia, sluggish liver, coming up of food, palpitation, constipation and other intestinal troubles. Sold by druggists and dealers everywhere. Try a bottle, take no substitute.—Adv.

Seems So.

"Things you worry about never happen." "Then it must pay to worry—a cheap way of staving off trouble."

Plaint of the Day.

"Will, the doctor says I must have a little change." "Sorry, dear, but I need it all for carfare."

Ask for "HILL'S"

FIVE MILLION PEOPLE USED IT LAST YEAR

HILL'S CASCARA QUININE BROMIDE

Standard cold remedy for 20 years—in tablet form—safe, sure, no opiates—breaks up a cold in 24 hours—relieves grip in 3 days. Money back if it fails. The genuine box has a Red top with Mr. Hill's picture.

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