

The Cow Puncher

BY ROBERT J. C. STEAD.

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CHAPTER II.—(Cont'd.)

Mr. Elden promptly engaged the doctor in conversation, and in a few moments had gleaned the main facts in connection with the accident and the father and daughter which it had brought so involuntarily under his roof. He was quite sober now, and his speech, although slowly, was not indistinct. He was still able to pay to woman that respect which curbs the coarseness of a tongue for years subjected to little discipline.

After breakfast Irene attended to the wants of her father, and by this time the visiting doctor was manifesting impatience to be away. Other fees were calling him, and he assured Doctor Hardy, what the latter quite well knew, that nothing more could be done for him at present. He would come again at any time in summer, when the young man, or if his professional duties should bring him into the neighborhood of the Elden ranch. But Dave declared with prompt finality that the horses must rest until after noon, and the doctor, who really spent the morning rambling in the foothills. Meanwhile the girl busied herself with work about the house, in which she was effecting a rapid transformation.

After the midday dinner Dave hurried the team for their journey to town, but before leaving inquired of Irene if there were any special purchases, either personal or for the use of the house, which she would recommend. With some diffidence she pointed out one that was uppermost in her thoughts—soap, both laundry and toilet. Dr. Hardy had no hesitation in calling for a box of his favorite cigars and some new magazines, and took occasion to press into the boy's hand a bill out of all proportion to the value of the supplies requested. There was an argument in the yard, which the girl did not fully hear, between father and son, but she gathered that the old man insisted on going to town, and, failing that, that Dave should replenish his stock of whisky, to neither of which would the young man consent. It was evident that Dave was the more sensible person in the affair of the Elden ranch. The day was introductory to others that were to follow. Dave returned the next afternoon, riding his own horse, and heavily laden with clean magazines, soap, and with a little package which proved to be a sponge, which he had bought of his own initiative, and which he tendered to Irene. She took it with a frown, and with a look which said plainly that she was not a bona fide contributor to the toilet equipment of the house, or a quiet retiree designed to offset the effect of the appeal for soap.

The following day it was decided that the automobile, which since the accident had lain dormant by the roadside, should be brought to the ranch buildings. Dave harnessed his team, and, instead of riding one of the horses, walked behind, driving by the reins, and accompanied by the girl, who had proclaimed her ability to steer the car. When they reached the stream she hesitated, remembering her mishap, but the boy slipped his untroubled hand firmly under her arm, and they walked the log in safety. It seemed to Irene that he continued his assistance when it was no longer needed, but she accepted the courtesy without remark.

With the aid of the team and Dave's help the car was soon righted, and was found to be none the worse for its defection from the beaten track. Irene presided at the steering wheel, watching the road with great interest, and turning the wheel too far on each occasion, which gave to her course a somewhat wavy or undulating order, such as is found in bread knives, or perhaps a better figure would be to compare it with that rolling motion effected by fancy skaters. However, the mean of her direction corresponded with the mean of the trail, and all went merrily until the stream was approached. Here was a rather steep descent, and the car showed a sudden purpose to engage the horse in a contest of speed. The animals were suspicious enough at best of their strange wagon, and had no thought of allowing it to assume the initiative. Now, Irene knew per-

fectly well where the brake was, and how to use it. In fact, there were two brakes, operated by different members, and perhaps it was this duplication, intended to insure safety, that was responsible for her undoing. Her first impulse was to use the emergency, but to do so she must remove her hand from the steering-wheel, where it was very fully occupied. She did start to put this impulse into effect, but an unusually violent deflection caused her to reconsider that intention. She determined to use the foot-brake, a feat which was accomplished, under normal conditions, by pressing one foot firmly against a contraption somewhere beneath the steering-post. She shot a quick glance downward, and to her alarm discovered not one but three contraptions, all apparently designed to receive the pressure of a foot—if one by the young man, or if his professional duties should bring him into the neighborhood of the Elden ranch. But Dave declared with prompt finality that the horses must rest until after noon, and the doctor, who really spent the morning rambling in the foothills. Meanwhile the girl busied herself with work about the house, in which she was effecting a rapid transformation.

Then they struck the water. It was not more than two feet deep, but the extra resistance it caused, and the extra alarm it excited in the horses, resulted in the breaking of the larval. Dave still clung fast to his team, and now that the terrifying rival no longer pursued them, they were soon brought to a standstill. Having pacified them, he tied them to a post and returned to the stream. The car sat in the middle; the girl had put her feet on the seat beside her, and the swift water flowed by a few inches below. She was laughing merrily when Dave, very wet in parts, appeared on the bank.

"Well, I'm not wet, except for a little splashing," she said, "and you are. Does anything occur to you?" With out reply he walked stolidly into the water, took her in his arms, and carried her ashore. The larval was soon repaired, and the car hauled to the ranch buildings without further mishap.

"In the day he said to her, 'Can you ride?'" "Some," she answered. "I have ridden city horses, but don't know a city horse has to do as he is told, but a ranch horse seems to do more much as he likes. But I would like to try—if I had a saddle."

"I have an extra saddle," he said. "But it's a man's. They all ride that way here."

She made no answer, and the subject was dropped for the time. But the next morning she saw Dave ride away, leading a horse by his side. He did not return until evening, but when he came the idle horse carried a saddle.

"It's a straddle-legged," he said when he drew up beside Irene, "but it's a girl's. I couldn't find anything else in the whole diggins."

"I'm sure it will do—solidly—if I can just stick on," she replied. But another problem was already in her mind. It apparently had not occurred to Dave that women require special clothing for riding, especially if it's a "straddle-legged." She opened her lips to mention this, then closed them again. He had been to enough trouble on her account. He had already spent a whole day scouring the country for a saddle. She would manage some way.

Late that night she was busy with scissors and needle.

CHAPTER III.
Later in the day from his injuries as rapidly as could be expected, and, while he chafed somewhat over spending his holidays under such circumstances, the time passed not unhappily. Had he sought the world over for a haven from the intrusion of business or professional cares, he

could have found it nowhere in greater perfection than in the foothill country centring about the Elden ranch. Here was an Arcadia where one might well return to the simple life; a little bay of still water sheltered from the on-rushing time of affairs by the warm brown prairies and the white-bosomed mountains towering through their draperies of blue-purple mist. It was life as far removed from his accustomed circles as if he had been suddenly spirited to a different planet. It was life without the contact of life, without the crowd and jostle and haste and anxiety and despair that are called life; but the doctor wondered if, after all, it did not come nearer to filling the measure of experience—which is life.

A considerable acquaintance had sprung up between him and the senior Elden. The rancher had come from the East forty years before, but in turning over their memories the two men found many links of association; third persons known to them both; places, even streets and houses common to their feet in early manhood; events of local history which each could recall, although from different angles. And Elden's life in the West had been a treasury of experience, in which he now dipped for the first time in years, regaling his guest with tales of the open range long before barbed wire had snuck its poisonous fang into the heart of the ranchman; tales of horse-dealing and cattle-rustling, with glimpses of sudden justice unrecorded in the official documents of the territory; of whisky-running and excess and all those large adventures that drink the red blood of the wilderness. In his grizzled head and stooping frame he carried more experiences than would fill a dozen well-rounded city lives, and he had the story-teller's art which seems to spell dramatic effect by a too strict adherence to fact. But over one phase of his life he kept the curtain resolutely down. No ray of conversation would he admit into the more personal affairs of his heart, or of the woman who had been his wife, and even when the talk turned on the boy he quickly withdrew it to another topic, as though the subject were dangerous or distasteful. But once, after a long silence following such a diversion, had he betrayed himself into a whispered remark, an outburst of feeling rather than a communication. "I've been alone so much," he said. "It seems I have never been anything but alone. And—sooner or later—it gets you—it gets you."

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(To be continued.)



The Care of Your Mesh Bag.

Mesh bags have been increasingly popular for several years because of their pleasing appearance, but some who have received mesh bags of gold or silver as gifts, or who have purchased them, have been disappointed in regard to their wearing qualities. Either the meshes soon begin to show tiny holes like dropped stitches, or the bags themselves begin to look dark and dingy.

Keeping the bags in good condition is really a matter of personal care. The mesh bags of better quality are made of soldered links, and while solder is a metal, it is not what might be called a tough, resistant metal, and the meshes themselves are all fine and delicate.

If the mesh bag is used thoughtlessly it will suffer, of course. No sharp article should ever be carried within its folds, such as nail files, orange-wood sticks, hairpins, sharpened pencils, or anything with a point which will penetrate the meshes and cause tiny breaks to appear.

In one case, the owner of a very beautiful mesh bag found that her treasure was beginning to show mysterious breaks. She traced it to a small, bead change purse which she was in the habit of carrying inside the bag. The beads were of just the right size to force themselves into the mesh opening if circumstances were right. She had the bag repaired and stopped using the little bead change purse and had no further cause for complaint.

It is also a mistake to force the carrying capacity of the mesh bag, for it is essentially a dress article, and not one to be used for utilitarian purposes. The owner of the mesh bag should remember if she goes shopping that a more capacious leather or silk receptacle into which she can stuff parcels of different sizes, will be a convenience, while the charming mesh bag will be saved for more appropriate use.

If the article is gold or silver plated, the plating will wear off in time, although, if this is a good quality it should last as well as any other plated article would if it is taken care of. But under no circumstances should it be cleaned with gritty scouring powders or soaps, or with unknown materials.

One owner of a mesh bag scrubbed it vigorously with a borax preparation. After the first cleaning, it was certainly improved for much of the soil was removed, but after several cleanings, the plate was removed also. The bag was replated and the owner was sadder and wiser for the expense was unnecessary.

In the future, she used a good silver cleaning polish and a soft little brush. After cleaning, the bag was rinsed thoroughly under the warm water faucet until it was quite clean; then it was dried on a soft, clean towel and hung wide open in a draught of air, that any clinging moisture within the meshes might be evaporated.

Bags of gold plate or of solid gold should only be cleaned with some preparation obtained from a reliable jeweler for the purpose. Naturally the bags will grow dingy if they are carried throughout a season without being cleaned. The meshes are peculiarly adapted to catch dust anyway, so a frequent cleaning with suitable materials, or a good rinsing in clear water, and a process of gentle drying

will help to keep the bag attractive. Some owners of mesh bags have lined them with silk or kid, to prevent soiling delicate handkerchiefs, light card cases, or anything of that kind. This really spoils the effect of the dainty article itself, making it look thick instead of fine and filmy. It also complicates the cleaning process, for, of course, such a lining has to be removed before cleansing is undertaken. The trouble can be avoided by keeping the bag clean and by using a small, inner, removable envelope of silk into which handkerchiefs or anything else of a light color can be slipped. Even this is unnecessary if all meshes are quite clean, as they should be.

A Novel Playhouse.

Take the old, worn-out, large umbrella and make it into a playhouse. Find a stump into which the umbrella handle can be securely fastened—use a bit of cement to hold it if necessary. Draw a circle around the stump, about six feet in diameter. To do this, tie a string three feet long to the handle of the umbrella; on the other end of the string tie a sharp stick with which to make the circle. Then make a flower-bed about ten inches wide along this circle, and in the flower-bed plant morning glory or other quickly growing vine seed. By the time the seeds are up, tie stout hemp strings from each of the ribs of the umbrella to the stakes. As the vines grow they form a green wall, and the umbrella forms the roof of a charming little playhouse.

Refinishing of Furniture.

Are you going to paint that chair or table that is stored away in the attic or shed? Painted furniture is very popular nowadays, why not make the most of what we have and bring these old deserted pieces of furniture and rejuvenate them?

To make a perfect job of an old varnished piece, every bit of varnish should be removed. Unless this is done the work will not be entirely satisfactory. Varnish may be removed on smooth surfaces by scraping with a knife blade, piece of glass, steel wool, or sandpaper. This is too harsh a treatment for veneered or delicate surfaces. Care must always be taken not to mar or dent the wood.

Ammonia, turpentine and alcohol will dissolve varnish but the most satisfactory method is to use a commercial varnish remover. There are many of them on the market and all are about equally good. They soften the varnish and it can be easily removed by scrubbing or wiping with a heavy cloth. For final cleaning use gasoline.

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Let the Fresh Air Enter.

Stuffiness in a room is due to twice or thrice-breathed stale air, and there is nothing more mentally and physically debilitating. Unfortunately, the usual demand of "open the window," does not do much good, and that is because, when the opening is effected by pulling down the top sash a few inches, the impossible is being attempted.

There cannot be an exit of used air in the same place as there is an ingress of fresh air. Warm, rarefied air will, of course, escape through the top of an opened window, unless it is beaten back by a cold and heavier air current. The cross action then produces a swirling draught—a fertile source of colds. Also, the amount of fresh air so obtained will be negligible, for the used air will rob the fresh air of part of its oxygen, and the result will be a second-grade air.

The proper and scientific way of securing the egress of used air and the ingress of fresh air, is to push up the lower window sash to the top and pull down the upper sash to within four inches of the sill.

A board, cut to size, should be placed between the sill and the pulled-down upper sash. Its purpose is to exclude a horizontal draught from any person sitting close to the window.

With the sashes thus arranged the outer and fresh air will find, as is obvious, a downward and natural entrance, and the lighter and stale air will escape upward and out.

Minard's Liniment for Burns, etc.

The people of Amsterdam, Holland, have been taught, by means of an official movie film, how to behave in public—on which side of the pavement to walk, how to hold a cane, an umbrella,

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THE MOST DREADED DEMON OF THE DEEP

THRILLING SEA YARNS OF THE OCTOPUS.

Superstitious Natives of Certain Parts of the World Worship it as a "God."

The sea holds no more tragic creature than the devil-fish, or, as it is known to science, the octopus. Whilst men may fear the shark, that cannibal amongst fishes, there is something so uncanny, so sinister, about the octopus that it is in a class of its own amongst the dangers of the sea.

During a recent voyage of the liner Carmania, of the Cunard Line, across the Atlantic, an octopus was washed on board by a huge wave. The ship's carpenter went forward to ascertain if any material damage had been done by the sea, and was astonished to find, wedged between two winches, an enormous specimen of that terrible creature. Before he could retreat, the octopus had put forth on its tentacles, and was attempting to draw the sailor into its clutches.

Luckily, he was able to seize an iron bar from one of the winches, and began to hack at the slimy feeler that was being entwined about him. But these creatures feel little pain, and it was only after a struggle lasting fifteen minutes that, with the assistance of other members of the crew, it was eventually beaten to death.

The octopus, as its name suggests, has eight feelers, or tentacles, covered with suckers, emanating from a round, pulpy body, and these feelers are enormously powerful. It can be killed almost to pieces before it will succumb, and has often been known to draw under water and drown a strong man though repeatedly shot through and through with revolver bullets.

"Black Blood."

Its eyes, which are colorless and fixed, give it a sinister and terrifying appearance. It has great courage and resource for so low a type of animal, and has been known, at the mouth of the Zambezi River, to grasp at cattle drinking in the water and attempt to drag them under.

Not so very long ago, a sailor searching for clams amongst the rocks of a South Pacific island suddenly felt a "black blood" at his ankle, and, looking down, saw that he was held by the tentacles of a devil-fish. Not at first alarmed, he drew his clasp-knife and slashed at it; but though he inflicted severe wounds, the feeler did not weaken its hold. Slowly, slowly, the man felt himself being drawn into the water, and then, to his horror, another of the slimy arms rose out of the sea and grasped his leg.

Bracing himself as firmly as possible against a rock, the man then dropped his knife, seized a native spear he had been carrying, and began stabbing down into the pool where the devil-fish lay. He caught a glimpse of the creature's terrible eyes looking pitilessly up at him out of the clear water, and courage almost deserted him. But, redoubting his efforts, he managed to strike down through one of the eyes into the creature's brain. A flood of "black blood" stained the water; the grip relaxed, and the octopus sank slowly out of sight.

Worshipped as a "God."

Not so lucky was another man, who fishing from a small boat in Delagoa Bay, fell himself suddenly grasped round the waist by the tentacles of an exceptionally large octopus. Though he grasped the side of the boat and hung on with all his strength, while a companion fired again and again into the water where the creature lay, the ill-fated man was drawn out of the boat and drowned.

In certain parts of the world the dread in which the octopus is held has caused the superstitious natives to worship it. In one case an enormous specimen has been washed over the coral reef into a lagoon, where it lives on the food provided by the "worshippers."

Formerly, this food used to consist of live human beings, but the natives have now been induced to substitute young goats, calves, etc. They still make a great ceremony of the weekly feeding of the octopus, and though many of them attend the missions, they are generally missing from the school-rooms or the church when the ceremony of appeasing their hereditary "god" is taking place.

Electric Flypaper.

The struggles of a fly caught on a sheet of anglefoot paper are painful to witness. Perhaps, however, the insect undergoes no worse sufferings than when poisoned.

Why not kill the flies by electricity? A simple little machine for the purpose has been invented. You hang it on the wall and it does the rest. Bait, of any kind suitable, attracts the insects to a slot through which it is exposed to a flow of small current. The slot is a narrow elongated opening between two metal plates. When a fly crawls across from one of the plates to the other, it is instantly killed and falls into a little trough beneath. This happens because the plates are attached by binding posts to a couple of copper wires which pass through an electric cord connected to an ordinary plug, which is inserted in an electric socket.

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