

Nothing stimulates the digestion like



KEEN'S
Mustard
Freshly Mixed

The Cow Puncher

BY ROBERT J. C. STEAD.

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CHAPTER III.—(Cont'd)

The shadows had deepened into darkness, and the admiring silence of the hills hung about them as they dropped from their saddles at the Eliden door. A light shone from within, and Dr. 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 butlered home, and then this background of primal simplicity, where the old cow-man 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 every one shocked over this mingling of the classes. But the girl's reverie was cut short by a sudden affectionate licking of her fingers, and glancing downward she found Brownie, adopted early in her visit at the Eliden's, expressing its fondness in the only fashion at its command.

The calf had been an incident in her ranch experience. It was a late comer, quite unable to keep pace with the earlier fruits of the herd, and had the additional misfortune to be born of an ambitious mother, who had not thought of allowing her domestic duties to impair her social relationships with the matrons and males of her immediate set. She had no place for old-fashioned notions; she was determined to keep up with the herd, and the calf might fare as best it could. So they rambled from day to day, she swaggering along with the set, but turning now and then to send an impatient moo toward the small brown body stuck on four long, ungainly legs—legs which had an unfor-

fortunate habit of folding up, after the fashion of a jack-knife, upon unforeseen occasions, and precipitating the owner in a huddled mass on the ground. At rare times, when heaven must have stooped close above the herd, the mother instinct would assert itself, and the cow would return to her offspring, licking it lavishly and encouraging it with moanings of deep affection, but such periods of bliss were of short duration. The lure of the life was too great for her; she felt herself born for more important roles than mere motherhood, and she would presently rush away to her favorite circle, leaving her begotten to such fates as might befall.

It was on such an occasion, when left far behind, that one of the ungainly legs found its way into a badger hole. The collapse was harder and more complete than usual, and the little sufferer would have died there had he not been found by Dave and Irene in the course of their rides. Dave, after a moment's examination, drew his revolver, but Irene pled for the life of the unfortunate.

"Oh, don't kill it, Dave," she cried. "You couldn't kill it! Let's get the wagon and take it home. It'll get all right, won't it?"

"Never be worth a—," said Dave, checking his vocabulary in the nick of time. "Once they begin to give trouble you might's well knock 'em on the head."

"But it's cruel," she protested. "Just to kill it because it's hurt!"

"I don't know about the cruel," he answered. "You see, they're all raised, every one of 'em, to be killed, anyway. Just like people, I guess. Sooner or later. But if your heart's set on this little critter, we'll save it 's long as we can."

So the calf was taken home and became Irene's special care. The mother was captured and tied up in the corral, and the calf, although lame, began to thrive and wax strong. It would gallop in its ungainly way about the yard, in its exuberation of youthful innocence, while the mother pined for the latest scandal from the great fields over the hills.

"Brownie, we'll call it," said Irene, "on account of its color."

"All right," said Dave, "on account of your sweater. That'll sort of show the connection."

So this night she rubbed its nose, and scratched its forehead, and then reproved its affection, which had a habit of running to extremes. And the mother cow moaned from the corral, and Brownie forgot his benefactress and ambled away at the call of the 'ood.

"Well, you youngsters must have this country pretty well explored," said Dr. Hardy, as they entered the house. "Where was it to-day; the prairies, the foothills, or the real fellows behind?"

"The canyon, up the river," said Irene, drawing off her sweater. "Where was the cat? Gee, I'm hungry. Getting pretty supple, Daddykin, aren't you?"

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

So the afternoon's conversations in the canyon and the cabin had been of the same theme, although prompted by very different emotions. Yet the girl wondered whether the loneliness in the old man's heart, which cried out to his own sex, might not bear some relationship to a strange, new sense she herself was experiencing; a sense which reminded her that she was incomplete—and alone. And it called across the barrier of sex for completion.

"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 be correct. She wondered how often her father had turned from the path of the true adventure because her mother "might not see it that way."

"It's been a good time," the doctor

continued, when they had commenced supper, "but I've already overstayed my holiday. Well, I had a good excuse. I feel that 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 to-morrow and bringing back someone 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 tedious for the girl all that day, and looking into the future she saw the spectre 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, 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 be 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 she did she wore on the 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. Indeed, from their meeting at the doorway his eyes scarcely left her. He chose to call her cook.

"Swell parakees, 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. Had 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 over-

flowing 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. But that was not what brought the color. She was addressed as a menial, as a hired helper in the Elden household! Her own honesty told her that even that was not what brought the color. It was not even the man's insolent familiarity; it was his assumption that his familiarity would not be resented. 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 empty."

He attempted a laugh, but the meal was finished in silence. The stranger lit a cigarette, and Irene went to the door with Dave. An over-lace of silvery moonlight draped the familiar objects near at hand and faded into the dark, vague lingerie of night where the spruce trees cut their black wedge along the valley.

"Come for a walk," he whispered. "The horses are dead, 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; he felt that the ages could not utter all he had to say to-night, but he was tongue-tied under the spell of her beauty.

"You squashed 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. "Reckle," he said, "that fellow makes me sick. All the way out he talked about girls. If it hadn't been that I was makin' the trip for your father I'd 'a' licked him on the road, sure. He's a cinch, an' wears a white collar, but he ain't fit to speak 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 tree, and 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."

(To be continued.)

Woman's Interests

Wedding Plans.

For an informal church or home wedding, an afternoon frock of silk, crepe, taffeta or satin, is quite appropriate. Brown, blue or grey shades are smart in this costume. There are wonderful possibilities in an out-of-door ceremony which seems to call for crisp organdies for the bride and her attendants.

Ancient lore declares June to be the luckiest month of all for the bride and surely nature sends her choicest blossoms to grace June weddings. Who would call upon the florist shop when right in our own garden are roses, sweet peas, lilacs or old-fashioned flowers for old-fashioned bouquets?

A shower bouquet of white is for the bride who wears white. With the informal wedding frock, the corsage bouquet is usually worn.

A wild flower wedding fits into the out-of-door scheme. Daisies, violets, buttercups or mountain laurel will be in bloom. Some of the loveliest summer weddings nowadays are arranged on the lawn. A shady, grassy spot is quite essential and a flower garden or group of shrubbery makes an ideal background. White ribbons looped between stakes mark the path of the wedding party from the house to the arch of wild flowers under which the vows of "love, honor and obey" are taken.

In setting the day for the wedding, don't forget this old rhyme:

Monday for health,
Tuesday for wealth,
Wednesday the best day of all;
Thursday for losses,
Friday for crosses,
Saturday no luck at all.

Fashion dictates the orange blossom ring. No longer does the plain gold band suffice. It has been replaced by the chased or engraved ring, with dainty orange blossoms standing out in relief. These rings are not half so wide as our mothers' wedding rings and are rather thick through. They are seamless, just as tradition tells us they should be; to signify endless love the hopes of a prosperous marriage are expressed by the 'E' on the ring and the long-suffering groom may have an especially for masculine use. Heirloom wedding rings may be made over into one of the new orange blossom rings and may even be overlaid with platinum or white gold.

The bride's cake is frosted with white icing. A thimble, wedding ring and coin are baked in the cake, which is cut by the bride at the wedding breakfast. The girl who draws the piece of cake containing the ring will be married within a year. The coin predicts wealth. The thimble—what do you suppose?

Every guest will wish to "dream" on the wedding cake, of course, so they will either carry away a small piece of the big cake, or be given individual bride's cakes in tiny white boxes. The groom's cake is dark, and is cut by the groom.

For the shower of rice, from which no bride escapes, provide individual

bags for each guest. The tiny bags are made from a twelve-inch square of tartan, by bringing the four corners together and tying with a white ribbon. Another clever idea is to make a slipper-shaped bag of the tartan and fill with rice; or if you could escape the rice shower, provide baskets or bags of rose petals.

There will be guests, hence the question, "how to invite them." Where only relatives and a few intimate friends are to be invited, it would be quite lovely if you ask them in person. An alternative is the phone call or personal notes. Engraved invitations on unglazed white paper are used for church weddings or when many guests are bidden. These are mailed from two to four weeks in advance. If you prefer announcements they should be mailed just after the wedding.

Lilacs.

Beside the farm-house, old and gray. The lilac waves its purple plume. And blossoms, bright with dewy spray. Shed all around a sweet perfume.

And as the purple banners toss Amid the breeze of the May. The heart turns back, with sense of loss, To May-time and a garden gay.

There, lilacs bloomed beside the door. An enchanted spot it seemed to be. And one, whose voice is heard no more, Was there to share its joys with me!

And ever now when spring returns. And lilacs bloom beside the gate. For her loved voice my spirit yearns While I can only trust and wait.

—Helen B. Anderson.

Canning Rhubarb.

Fortunate it is that the first fruit of the season to be canned is one of the most easily and safely done. As a rule, all fruits and vegetables with a large amount of acid "keep" well. Because of the extreme acidity of rhubarb it is possible to can it without cooking or sugar, like cranberries and gooseberries. If it is cooked, the sterilizing process is more simple than for the less acid fruits.

A combination of the "open-kettle" and "cold-pack" methods is good, as it does away with the waste space in the jar from shrinkage, but keeps all the flavor. Cut the rhubarb in one-inch pieces and cook with one or two tablespoonsful of water and sugar (one-half to one cupful for each pint of fruit) for three or four minutes. Pack in sterilized jars and sterilize in a water bath ten to twenty minutes, or under pressure (five pounds) ten minutes. If the fruit is to be used for pies, omit the sugar. Seal, invert and cool.

Some people prefer hot water canning without sugar—which is the same as recipe No. 2, substituting hot water for the syrup. Pack the sterilized jars with uncooked pieces, fill to overflowing with boiling water and sterilize twenty to thirty minutes in a pressure cooker at five pounds pressure. Seal, invert and cool.

Cold water canning—The quickest and simplest way of handling is to can without cooking—a procedure which is possible because of the extreme acidity. To do this, wash the stalks and cut them into desired lengths—either one inch pieces or in pieces long enough to stand upright to the neck of the jar. Pack a sterilized jar and fill to overflowing with pure cold water by placing it under the faucet and allowing the water to fill up all air spaces. (If the water supply is uncertain use boiled, cooled water.) Adjust the rubber and seal.

Cold pack canning—For a cooked, sweetened sauce, pack the rhubarb in a jar and fill it to overflowing with a hot syrup made of equal quantities of sugar and water and boil five minutes. Adjust the rubber and cover, and ster-

ilize twenty to thirty minutes in a hot water bath, or ten or fifteen minutes in a pressure cooker at five pounds pressure. Seal the jar, invert and cool. The disadvantage of this process is that the rhubarb shrinks during the sterilization and space in the jar is wasted. A remedy for this difficulty is to blanch it for one minute and cold-dip before packing in the jars, but some of the flavor will be lost.

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Woman's Interests

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