

"BULLY"*A story every soldier should read**Written for the Western Home Monthly by T. C. C. Beamish*

MOTHER was a Texas longhorn, long, lean, and lanky, but with such elegant ears; father, a Durham Bull, on the contrary was fat and portly with a great voice that rocked the air, especially when he was mad, which was quite often, as some of his harem were always casting sheep's eyes at the young bucks of the Hereford and Angus family.

I was born in Alberta, on the bald-headed prairie, in the spring of 1906. My! how damp and all-in I felt as I hit the ground; a kind of tickling feeling gradually revived me, I opened my eyes only to shut them quickly as a long, queer, rough sort of thing curled around them; hearing a not unpleasant cooing, gurgly sound I looked up again—and understood! Ma-a was giving me my matutinal massage! It was alright too!! Beginning to feel quite spry I jumped up, stretched my legs, then started to have breakfast; as I was getting down to the creamiest part of it two cow-punchers rode up—I was curious, so were they; they stopped, so did I.

"Holy mackinaw" laughs the ugliest one. "Why, you old maverick I didn't think it was in you."

"What is it, Elmer?" whispers the other hoarsely, as if in pain, "It kind of hurts my eyes so's I can't see proper."

"Search me," says Elmer, "It looks like a cross between a clothes-rack and a hair-trunk."

I felt so embarrassed and indignant that I dashed around to ma-a's off-side and tried to hide, they whooped like Indians at my agility, then rode off—thank goodness! I finished my breakfast and lying down, pondered on the gaucherie of some of these here humans. Time rolled on; we had lots of company, fun and change. It was very pleasant, though at times I had some pretty close calls from prairie-wolves but ma-a was right there with the crumpled horn stuff and soon "put the wind up them." Then came the round-up; ma-a, however, was too slick for them, no brand had ever singed her hide, she was on to all the wrinkles of the game, so we escaped.

In the long summer evenings, lying in the tall bunch-grass, ruminating and chewing the cud of reflection ma-a put me wise to all the dodges for fooling the cow-punchers, and, believe me, I certainly listened to her with both ears.

Then came that terrible winter when we were so hungry we chewed each others' tails till the hair was all gone, when thousands died, and how we came through, I don't know, but ma-a was a tough old girl sure enough and I guess I must have taken after her. A peculiar thing was that the sterner sex died first—first the bulls, then those others—.

When spring came at last you should have seen ma-a!! She was never much for looks anyhow, but now! Oh my!!

That summer she stepped on a rattlesnake—he did his bit—she did hers—but, getting rattled, she lost out, and I was left an orphan.

Some time afterwards I was nearly caught in the fall round-up by a particularly bull-headed cow-puncher, but I gave him such a time he let me go, exclaiming, "You measly-no-account-ordinary-raw-boned streak of gristle, go plumb to — then." His insults made me think, so ambling over to a near-by slough I had a good look at myself, and had to admit he was correct in a sense—I was rather homely-looking sure enough, but my eyes, I thought, were rather nice, and so expressive, in spite of the fact that he'd had his rope around my throat for about ten minutes.

Several luscious, peaceful years followed—years of long juicy grass; few flies, and deep cool water. Then came the year when so many of us disappeared off the range; we learnt, on inquiring, that the Head of our family, John Bull, was in trouble and needed all the family's assistance. The next round-up I went in voluntarily, anxious to do my

bit; being passed B2, which was a new brand of the boss', I guess.

While waiting in the corals for our train east I was singled out by the bums and loafers that always infest those places as a mark for their wit, "More frightfulness" laughs one idiot, "An almighty good harness rack I calls it," said another poor fool, and so on, but I didn't mind, we were off for France!! Chicago! Ah! what memories that name recalls! What poignant partings! How quickly we were sorted out, and up! The great concentration! The close confinement!

Then the boat! fellows from all over were packed in the hold, cheek by jowl, shoulder to shoulder. Some few of German extraction who were bottled up with us we gave the cold shoulder to, and told our abattoir experiences to each other with compressed lips.

France at last! Here we went different ways. In Havre I met some of the Aristocracy of our clan—the Flay-Bentos—they were sure some swells, not a bit stuck-up or hard to get on with, in fact, they had a good name with everyone.

Later I was given to a splendid looking youngster named Hugh, who was in an English regiment just off for the line.

I was his emergency iron ration, and trembled with fear (knowing my lack of enbonpoint) lest he might take a distaste for me on becoming acquainted. But he was such a jolly optimistic sort of kid that my fears, I guess, were groundless. I could feel the excitement increasing, just like being in a round-up. Over the top we went; only a few yards, then he stopped and suddenly collapsed; moaning, "Mother, mother, I'm coming," he twisted about a bit, then started murmuring "Lulu, old girl, please don't cry—please—that's a good kid, it had to be you know." Then he gave a sigh, a cold sort of shudder shook him, and he was very still.

Two or three days seemed to have passed when I felt a hand groping for me. "Hah! Great! Eureka! Bully". A Westerner I knew at once by the accent; Montana I surmised he was from. I was yanked out, then dropped, stopping over Hugh the Yank muttered, "You poor kid! Right through the head! I'll bet his folk will feel pretty sick when they get to know." Searching Hugh's pockets for some little keepsake to send his folk, he found a letter and a photo of Hugh's sister, Lulu.

He looked at the photo and in a voice that kind of trembled with a peculiar passion, exclaimed, "I'll bet this Lulu is a thoroughbred alright; game as they make 'em, too. It beats the devil how they keep that cool quiet look on their faces even when their hearts must be breaking. I'd sure like to meet one of them just to shake hands, that's all—just once. But I guess a guy like me hasn't any chance of meeting high-toned folks like her. No wonder these Brit-ishers are so damn obstinate in defending their country. I'll sure send this kid's things on if I get through, but by the bald-headed judaspriest, I'm going to take a crack at these dog-gone square-heads first, and if I have any luck they're going to get it good and plenty."

Straightening the kid out and covering him with his ground-sheet, he picked me up and crawled back into the shell-hole where he had been hiding for three days—with nothing to eat. Opening the tin he saw me and ejaculated, "Some old maverick you, Mr. Bully, you're about the gristliest sight I've seen so far, old-timer, and that's not a few, but I guess your a stayer so here's to you," and with that we amalgamated.

Becoming a new man in a few minutes, he collected a bunch of grenades lying about and, playing a lone-hand, cleaned up a machine-gun nest, killed a pile of huns and brought back to our lines a heap of prisoners.

Have I done my bit? Well, I guess yes! "Stubble."

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