

Bovril helps you to "turn the corner"

The Cow Puncher

BY ROBERT J. C. STEAD.

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CHAPTER XIII.—(Cont'd.)

"I don't think I would be in a hurry to buy," Eiden said, slowly turning his eyes on his partner. "You would perhaps be wiser to rent a home for a while. Rents are becoming easier."

"But I have bought," said Mrs. Hardy, and there was triumph rather than regret in her voice. "I have paid my deposit."

"It is the policy of this firm," Eiden continued, "not to force or take advantage of hurried decisions. The fact that you have already made a deposit does not alter that policy. I think I may speak for my partner and the firm when I say that your deposit will be held to your credit for thirty days, during which time it will constitute an option on the property which you have selected. If, at the end of that time, you are still of your present mind, the transaction can go through as now planned; and if you have changed your mind your deposit will be returned."

Conward shifted under Dave's direct eye. He preferred to look at Mrs. Hardy. "What Mr. Eiden has told you about the policy of the firm is quite true," he managed to say. "But, as it happens, this transaction is not with Conward & Eiden, but with me personally. I find it necessary to dispose of the property which I have just sold to you at such an exceptional price—he was looking at Mrs. Hardy—"I find it necessary for financial reasons to dispose of it naturally. I cannot run a chance of having my plans overturned by any possible change of mind on your part. Not that I think you will change your mind," he hurried to add. "I think you are already convinced that it is a very good buy indeed."

"I am entirely satisfied," said Mrs. Hardy. "The fact that Mr. Eiden wants to get the property back makes me more satisfied," she added, with the peculiarly irritating laugh of a woman who thinks she is extraordinarily shrewd, and is only very silly.

"The agreement is signed?" said Dave.

He walked to the desk and picked up the documents, and the cheque that lay upon them. His eye ran down the familiar contract. "This agreement is in the name of Conward & Eiden," he said. "This cheque is payable to Conward & Eiden."

He was addressing Conward. Conward's vivid face had become white, and it was with difficulty he controlled his anger. "They are all printed that way," he explained. "I am going to have them endorsed over to me."

"You are not," said Dave. "You are charging this woman twenty-five thousand dollars for a house that won't bring twenty thousand on the open market to-day, and by Fall won't bring ten thousand. The firm of Conward & Eiden will have nothing to do with that transaction. It won't even endorse it over."

A fire was burning in the grate. Dave walked over to it, and very slowly and deliberately thrust the agreement and the cheque into the flame. For a moment the printed letters stood out after the body of the paper was consumed; then all fell to ashes.

"Well, if that doesn't beat all!" Mrs. Hardy ejaculated. "Are all cow punchers so discourteous?"

"I mean no discourtesy," said Dave. "And I hope you will let me say now what I should have said before, that

it was with the deepest regret I learned from your conversation of the death of Dr. Hardy. He was a gentleman who commanded my respect, as he must have commanded the respect of all who knew him. If my behaviour has seemed abrupt, I assure you I have only sought to serve Dr. Hardy's widow—and his daughter."

"It is a peculiar service," Mrs. Hardy answered, curtly. She felt she had a grievance against Dave. He had not lived down to her conception of what a raw Western youth should be. Even the act of burning the agreement and the cheque, dramatic though it was, it had a poise to it that seemed inappropriate. Dave should have snatched the papers—it would have been better, had the partners fought over them—he should have crumpled them in rage and consigned them to the fire with curses. Mrs. Hardy felt that in such conduct Dave would have been running true to form. His assumption of the manners of a gentleman annoyed her exceedingly.

"I can only apologize for my partner's behaviour," said Conward. "It need not, however, affect the transaction in the slightest degree. A new agreement will be drawn at once—an agreement in which the firm of Conward & Eiden will not be concerned."

"That will be more satisfactory," said Mrs. Hardy. She intended the remark for Dave's ears, but he had moved to a corner of the room and was conversing in low tones with Irene.

"I am sorry I had to make your mother's acquaintance under circumstances which, I fear, she will not even try to understand," he said to Irene. "I am sure she will not credit me with unselfish motives."

"Oh, Dave," Mrs. Eiden said, "that is—you don't know how proud you don't know how much of a man you made me feel you are." She was flushed and excited. "Perhaps I shouldn't talk like this. Perhaps—"

"It depends on one thing," Dave interrupted. "What is that?"

"It all depends on whether we are Miss Hardy and Mr. Eiden, or whether we are still Conward and Dave."

"Mother will buy the house from Mr. Conward," she said. "She is like that. And when we are settled up, I will come and see me, won't you—Dave?"

CHAPTER XIV.

When the Hardys had gone Conward turned to Eiden. "We had better try and find out where we stand," he said, trying to speak dispassionately, but there was a tremor in his voice.

"I agree," returned Eiden, who had no desire to evade the issue. "Do you consider it fair to select inexperienced women for your victims?"

Conward made a deprecating gesture. "There is nothing to be gained by quarrelling, Dave," he said. "Let us face the situation fairly. Let us get at the facts. When we have agreed as to facts, then we may agree as to procedure."

"Shoot," said Dave. He stood with his shoulder toward Conward, watching the dusk settling about the foothill city. The streets led away into the gathering darkness, and the square brick blocks stood in blue silhouette against a champagne sky. He became conscious of a strange yearning for this young metropolis; a sort of parental brooding over a bickering, lively, wayward youth. It was his city; no one could claim it more than he. And it was a good city to look upon, and to mingle in and to dream about.

"I think," said Conward, "we can agree that the boom is over. Booms feed upon themselves, and eventually they eat themselves up. We have done well, on paper. The thing now is to convert our paper into cash."

Dave turned about. "You know I don't claim to be any great moralist," Conward said, "and I have no pity for a gambler who deliberately sits in and gets stung. Consequently I am not troubled with any self-pity, nor any pity for you. And if you can get rid of our holdings to other gamblers I have nothing to say. But if it is to be loaded on to women who are investing the little savings of their lives—women like Bert Morrison and Mrs. Hardy—then I am going to have a good deal to say. And there is that man—what's his name?—Merton, I think; a lunger if there ever was one; tuberculosis written all over him; a widower, too, with a little boy, sent here as his last chance—you loaded him with stuff where he can't see the smoke of the city, and you call it city property. That's what I want to talk about," said Dave, with rising heat. "If business has to be done that way, then I say to hell with business!"

"I asked you not to quarrel," Conward returned, with remarkable composure. "I suggested that we get at



TAGGING FOR SISTER'S MEMORIAL

Miss Florence Cavell, a sister of Nurse Edith Cavell, selling violets at the foot of her sister's monument in London, on a tag day for the Cavell Memorial Fund, the anniversary of her death.

the facts. That seems to be a business suggestion. I think we are agreed that the boom is over. Values are on the down grade. The boomsters are departing. They are moving on to new fields, as we should have done a year or two ago, but I confess I had a sort of sentiment for this place. Well—that is the price of sentiment. It won't mix with business. Now, granting that the boom is over, where do we stand?"

"We are rated as millionaires, but we haven't a thousand dollars in the bank at this moment. This," he lifted Mrs. Hardy's cheque, "would have seen us over next pay day, but you say the firm must have nothing to do with it. And which is the more immoral—since you have spoken of morality—to accept labor from clerks whom you can't pay, or to sell property to women who say they want it and are satisfied with the price? We make our income by selling property. As soon as the sales stop, the income stops. Well, the sales have stopped. But the expense goes on. We have literally thousands of unsettled contracts. We must keep our staff together. We have debts to pay, and we owe it to our creditors to make collections so that we can pay those debts, and we can't make collections without staff. I sympathize with your feelings on this matter, Dave, but what's a man to do? It's like war; we must kill or be killed. Business is war of a kind. Why, on the property we are now holding the taxes alone will amount to twenty thousand dollars a year. And I put it up to you if we are going to stand on sentiment, who's going to pay the taxes?"

"I know—I know," said Dave, whose anger over the treatment of the Hardys was already subsiding. "We are in the grip of the system. As you have said, it is kill or be killed. Still—in war they don't usually kill women and non-combatants. That is the point I'm trying to make. I've no sentiment about others who are in the game as we are. If you limit your operations to them—"

"The trouble is, you can't. They're wise. They see the bottom going, and they quit. Most of them have already moved on. A few firms, like ourselves, will stay and try to fight it out; try, at least, to close up with a clean sheet, if we must close up. But we can't wind up a business without selling the stock on hand, and to whom are we to sell it, if not to people who want it? That is what you seem to object to."

"You place me in rather an unfair light," Dave protested. "What I object to is taking the life savings of people—people of moderate circumstances, mainly—in exchange for property which we know to be worth next to nothing."

"Yet you admit that we must clean up, don't you?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"And there's no other way," Dave said, rising and placing an arm on his partner's shoulder. "I sympathize with your point of view, but my boy, it's pure sentiment, and sentiment has no place in business. And you remember the terms of our partnership, don't you?"

(To be continued.)

Switzerland Has No Language.

The Swiss constitute that curious anomaly, a nation without a language, and in this they are alone among all the peoples of the world. This is all the more remarkable when their intense patriotism is considered, and their really wonderful love of country.

The official languages are German, French, and Italian, these three being the recognized "mother tongue" of the majority of the inhabitants.

Average Weight of Brain.

The average weight of the brain of an adult male is just over three pounds; of a female, two pounds four ounces. The nerves are all connected with it directly or by the spinal marrow. These nerves with their branches and minute ramifications probably exceed 10,000,000 in number.

Minsard's Liniment for Colds, etc.

Electrical Power for Palestine.

One of the great undertakings for resettling Palestine is to use the swift current of the river Jordan from Mount Hermon to the Dead Sea to furnish electrical power for lights, railways and industrial purposes and water for irrigation. The cost of coal in Palestine—about twenty-five dollars a ton—is one of the chief reasons why the country is so backward in industry and transportation. The campaign for funds is now going on, and it seems that the Jews of Europe and America will provide the necessary money to harness the "one wide river."

Good Reason.

"I wonder," said the vicar, "if any of you boys or girls can tell me why Mary and Joseph fled into Egypt?"

"Because," said a shrill, thin voice, "because they hadn't paid their rent, sir."

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Obedient Orders.

Going into his stable one day, a farmer found his little son with a notebook and pencil in his hand, sitting astride one of the horses.

"Why, Eddie, he exclaimed, 'what in the world are you doing?'"

"Writing a composition," replied little Eddie.

"Well, why don't you write it in the house?"

"Because," answered Eddie, "the teacher told us to write a composition on a horse."

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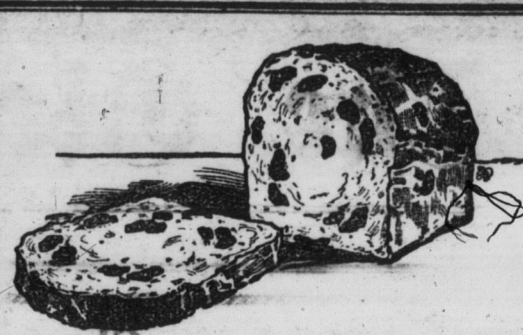
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Seven thousand persons each year are laid away—the burial certificate being marked "Rupture." Why? Because the unfortunate ones had neglected themselves or had been merely taking care of the sign (swelling) of the affliction and paying no attention to the cause. What are you doing? Are you neglecting yourself by wearing a truss, appliance, or whatever name you choose to call it? At best, the truss is only a make-shift—a false prop against a collapsing wall—and cannot be expected to act as more than a mere mechanical support. The binding pressure retards blood circulation, thus robbing the weakened muscles of that which they need most—nourishment.

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Voyagers of To-day.

It is difficult for us to realize to-day what voyaging meant to those old travelers of the mediaeval world. With their new-found compass they could launch out into what seemed boundless mystery. Beyond the little corner where they dwelt there was—what? No man knew; rich, strange secrets of undiscovered beauty and wonder, mysteries of nature, mysteries of civilization, wealth ungarneered and unlimited—perhaps; perhaps also, and far more likely, new and unimagined dangers, fierce, terrible, destroying monsters, ensnaring sirens and everywhere unknown, sudden, torturing possibilities of death. What excitement can we conceive comparable to that of setting forth with Columbus in those three little cockleshells on that tremendous adventure?

For to-day there is no such excitement of physical discovery left us any more. The globe is known, monotonously, wearily, painfully known. There are a few patches still scattered here and there where human foot has never wandered; but we are sure that they are precisely like the vastest patches that we have seen and travelled and studied, till they have ceased to have interest. Some day man may visit the moon and the planets; but still then the old charm of geographical exploration persists only for those who have unlimited curiosity or unappeasable restlessness.

Yet the explorer of to-day has still realms left him that can be traversed with untiring interest and delight, says a writer in *Youths' Companion*. The physical world may be mapped and measured; the world of thought has vistas of discovery and mystery that open newer and vaster with every day and year. Einstein upheaves the solid earth under our feet, teaches us that the surest calculations are built on rubble, mixes and mingles the infinitely least with the infinitely greatest, till our mental universe is dissolved into a cloudlike fabric of instability.

Even less explored and understood, even more fascinating in its immediate appeal to every one of us, is the dim, perplexing region of man's soul. There are secrets there, dreamy riches there, beauties there, which offer absorbing and sufficient employment to the most restless spirit and to the most ardent heart. And behind them all is the one supreme, enthralling, fulfilling mystery of God. What Columbus of to-morrow, armed with what celestial compass yet unfound, will probe those mighty depths and reveal to us some of the secrets for which humanity has thrived in vain so many thousand years?

The discoverer of to-day may sit quiet in his study and there encounter rarer wonders, stranger, madier adventures and more rewarding treasure than any fifteenth-century voyager ever conceived.

The Cuckoo and Her Egg.

The moving-picture photographer, it seems, has made a most interesting and unexpected discovery about the habits of the English cuckoo. What we knew before, says Country Life, was that the Cuckoo laid a large number of eggs; more than twenty have been attributed to one bird. The hen chooses the nest into which she means to put her own egg, and the nests invariably belong to the birds of one species.

Now the photographer for the cinematograph has found out something to add to that information. Records show that the cuckoo does not, as was originally supposed, lay her egg in a hedgehog and then carry it to the nest of her victim. Before laying her own egg she takes into her beak one of those that are already in the nest, lays her egg in the place it occupied and then flies off, not with her own, but with her victim's egg in her beak. That egg she later eats. Hitherto it has always been supposed that when the cuckoo is seen flying with the egg in her beak it is her own egg, which she is going to place in the nest of another bird.

The Hoss.

I love the hoss from hoof to head.
From head to hoof and tail and mane;
I love the hoss from hoof to head.
From head to hoof and back again.

"I love my God the first of all;
Then Him that perished on the Cross;
And next my wife and then I fall
Down on my knees and love the hoss."

—James Whitcomb Riley.

Up-to-Date.

An aeroplane was flying over the countryside, and the pilot was indulging in a little stunting. Absent-mindedly he looped the loop, quite forgetting that he had on board a parcel containing a pair of boots.

Naturally they dropped out, and landed just in front of an old woman in a cottage garden.

The package burst open, and out rolled the boots, much to her astonishment.

"Picking them up," she hobbled indoors, and called out to her husband: "Ere you are, Garge! They boots you ordered 'ave come. What a wonderful thing this wireless is! I thought I 'eard the buzz of 'em coming through the air."

Shipping increases.

In the year ending with June there was an increase in the world's shipping of 120 merchant vessels and 2,396,133 gross tons.

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