

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 slovenly, was not indelicate. 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 if summoned 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, willy-nilly, 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 harnessed the team for the 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 mentioned 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, falling 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 responsible person in the affairs 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 cigars, magazines, soap, and with a soft 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 slowly rising color, and with a strange misgiving whether this was a bona fide contribution to the toilet equipment of the house, or a quiet satire 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 unturned by the roadway, 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 unoccupied 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'sariat the car was soon righted, and was found to be none the worse for its deflection from the beaten track. Irene presided at the steering wheel, watching the road with great intentness, 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 affected 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. There was a rather steep descent, and the car showed a sudden purpose to engage the horses 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 could reach them—and as similar as the steps of a stair. This involved a further hesitation, and in automobiling he who hesitates invites a series of rapid experiences. By this time all Irene's attention was required to bring the car to some unanimity of direction. It was quite evident that it was running away. It was quite evident that the horses were running away. The situation assumed the qualities of a race, and the only matter of grave doubt related to its termination. Dave, still holding fast to the reins, ran beside the car, with prodigious strides which enabled him to bring but little restraint upon the team, and Irene held to the steering-wheel with grip of desperation.

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 theariat. 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 cold water, took her in his arms, and carried her ashore. Theariat was soon repaired, and the car hauled to the ranch buildings without further mishap.

Later in the day he said to her, "Can you ride?" "Some," she answered. "I have ridden city horses, but don't know about these ranch animals. You know, a city horse has to do as he is told, but a ranch horse seems to do pretty 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 strad-legger," he said when he drew up beside Irene, "but it's a girl's. I couldn't find anythin' else in the whole diggin'."

"I'm sure it will do splendidly—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 "strad-legger." 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.—Dr. Hardy recovered 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 gaiety 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 acquaintanceship 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 stuck its poisoned fang into the heart of the ranchman; tales of horse-stealing 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 scorns to spoil 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



Woman's Interests

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 dainty 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 in those old dejected 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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or turpentine. These will remove all traces of the varnish remover. If, however, it takes too much time to remove the varnish, be sure the varnish is absolutely clean, for paint will not stick to greasy surfaces. Rub with steel wool, emery paper, or a fine grade of sandpaper. This will smooth the rough pieces of varnish and at the same time scratch the smooth surface so that the paint will adhere to it. Use a no-gloss house paint for the first coat, and two coats of a light-colored paint is to be used over a dark surface. Allow each coat to dry thoroughly, then add a coat of enamel paint of the color desired.

First Woman Enters Inner Temple Bar.

The sacred portals of the Inner Temple were passed recently by a woman when Miss Ivy Williams became a member of the British bar, the first to be called in the Temple, says a recent London despatch. Miss Williams is an Oxford lecturer, who says she does not intend to practice, although she took precedence over a score of men because she possesses a certificate of honor. She appeared in a black evening dress, gowned as a barrister.

J. E. Dickens, son of the novelist, said: "Women have attained this eminence in law not by virtue of the frantic suffragist activity, not by dropping ink and smoke bombs, but by virtue of their great and inestimable service to their country during the war. The days are long past when women were regarded as mere chattels by men. They are no longer regarded as mere ornaments, but as the equals of men. The work of women during the war has won down every existing prejudice against women taking active part in the management of the country and in dispensing its laws."

Call night at the Inner Temple is always a memorable occasion, but this year's ritual made history for the British bar, when a woman adorned herself in wig and gown and was warmly received by her fellows.

Minard's Liniment for Dandruff.

A Hospital for Plants.

A hospital for plants is the latest device, designed by an ingenious Englishman, for the aid and comfort of lovers of flowers, who are often distressed at sight of their favorite plants ailing and dying from maladies for which they know no cure. When a sick plant is brought to the hospital, it is immediately examined and sent to the room prepared for its case. If it is suffering from a cold it is tended with heat; if it has become anaemic from an excess of solar rays, it goes through a freezing treatment. The unwholesome branches are removed, while those that are anaemic are fed. It seems that certain plants are very nervous. Some easily get neurasthenic, while their neighbors show undeniable symptoms of hysteria. But special managements permit the application to each of them of the treatment it requires.

Let the Fresh Air Enter.

Stiffness 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.

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