

# The Cow Puncher

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## THE COW PUNCHER

Here's an up-to-date story of the ranch country, the city and "over there." It's a love story—the story of the master passion that drives a man onward to success for the sake of the woman he loves. The hero is a maverick of the foothills. The heroine is a city girl born to the conventions.

As the boy was practicing shooting with his cayuse on the dead run along came the first automobile he had ever seen. It obligingly tipped over right behind the ranch house and broke the owner's leg. So there was time for Dave and Irene to get acquainted—which was to fall in love.

They parted with a kiss—she to go back to her city life, he to win his way up to her.

### CHAPTER I.

The shadows of the spruce trees fell northeastward, pointing long, cool fingers across belts of undulating prairie or leaning lazily against the brown foothills. And among the trees it was cool and green, and clear blue water rippled over beds of shining gravel.

The house was of round, straight logs; the shingles of the squat roof were cupped and blistered with the suns of many summers. Refuse loitered about the open door: many empty tins, a leaky barrel with missing hoops, boxes, harness, tangled bits of wire. Once there had been a fence, a sort of picket fence of little saplings, but wild broncos had kicked it to pieces and range steers had straggled unscarred across its scattered remnants.

Forward, and to the left, was a small corral, mill slabs on end or fences of lodgepole pine; a corner somewhat covered in, offering vague protection from the weather. The upper poles were worn thin with the cribbing of many horses.

The desertion seemed absolute; the silence was the silence of the unspoken places. But suddenly it was broken by a stamping in the covered part of the corral, and a man's voice saying:

"Hip, there! Whoa, you cayuse! Get under your saddle! Sleepin' against a post all day, you Sloppy-eye. Hip! Come to it!"

Horse and rider dashed into the sunlight. The boy—for he was no more than a boy—sat the beast as though born to it, his lithe frame taking every motion of his mount as softly as a good boat rides the sea. With a yell at his horse he snatched the hat from his head, turning to the sun a smooth brown face and a mane of dark hair, and slapped the horse across the flank with his crumpled headgear. The animal sprang into the air, then dashed at a gallop down the roadway, bearing the boy as unconcerned as a flower on its stem.

Suddenly he brought his horse to a stop, swung about, and rode back at a gentle canter. A few yards from the house he again spurred him to a gallop, and, leaning far down by the animal's side deftly picked a bottle from among the grass. Then he circled about, repeating this operation as often as his eye fell on a bottle, until he had half a dozen; then down the road again, carefully setting a bottle on each post of the fence that skirted it to the right.

Again he came back to the house, but when he turned his eye was on the row of posts and his right hand lay on the grip of his revolver. Again his sharp yell broke the silence and the horse dashed forward as though shot from a gun. Down the road they went until within a rod of the first bottle; then there was a flash in the sunlight and to the clatter of the horse's hoofs came the crack-crack of the revolver. Two bottles shivered to fragments, but four remained intact, and the boy rode back, muttering and disappointed. He reasoned with his horse as he rode:

"Tain't no use, you ol' Sloppy-eye; a fellow can't get the bead if he ain't got the fillin'—cooked meals an' decent chuck. I could plug 'em six out o' six—yout know that, you ol' Sloppy-eye. Don't you argue about it, neither. When I'm right inside your belt I smash 'em six out o' six, but I ain't right, an' you know it. You don't know nothin' about it. You never had a father; leastways you never had to

be responsible for one. . . . Well, it's comin' to a finish—a d—lame finish, you know that. You know—"

But he had reloaded his revolver and set up two more bottles. This time he broke four and was better pleased with himself. As he rode back his soliloquy was broken by a strange sound from beyond the belt of trees. The horse pricked up his ears and the boy turned in the saddle to listen. "Jumpin' crickets! What's loose?" he ejaculated. He knew every sound of the foothill country, but this was strange to him. A kind of snort, a sort of hiss, mechanical in its regularity, startling in its strangeness, it came across the valley with the unbroken rhythm of a watch tick.

"Well, I guess it won't eat us," he ventured at last. "We'll just run it down and perhaps poke a hole in it." So saying, he cantered along the road, crossed the little stream, and swung up the hill on the farther side.

He was half way up when a turn in the road brought him into sudden sight of the strange visitor. It was the first he had seen, but he knew it at once, for the fame of the automobile, then in its single-cylinder stage, had already spread into the farthest ranching country. The horse was less well informed. He bucked and kicked in rage and terror. But the boy was conscious not so much of the horse as of two bright eyes turned on him in frank and surprised admiration.

"What horsemanship!" she exclaimed. But the words had scarce left her lips when they were followed by a cry of alarm. For the car had taken a sudden turn from the road and plunged into a growth of young poplars that fringed the hillside. It half slid, half plowed its way into a semi-vertical position among the young trees. The two occupants were thrown from their seat; the girl fell clear but her father was less fortunate.

In an instant the boy had flung himself from his horse, dropping the reins to the ground, and the animal, although snorting and shivering, had no thought of disgracing his training by breaking his parole. With quick, ungainly strides the boy brought himself to the upturned machine. It was curious that he should appear to such disadvantage on his feet. In the saddle he was grace personified.

For a moment he looked somewhat stupidly upon the wreck. Had it been a horse or a steer he would have known the procedure, but this experience was new to his life. Besides there were strangers here. He had no fear of strangers when they wore chaps and colored handkerchiefs, but a girl in a brown sweater and an oldish man with a white collar were creatures to be approached with caution. The oldish man was lying on the ground, with a leg pinned under the car, and Brown Sweater raised his head against her knee and pressed his cheeks with small white fingers, and looked at the boy with bright gray eyes and said:

"Aren't you going to do anything?" That brought him back. "Sure," he said, springing to her side. "Whada ye want me to do?"

"I am afraid my leg is broken," said the man, speaking calmly notwithstanding his pain. "Can you get the jack out of the toolbox and raise the car?"

The girl pointed to the box, and in a moment he had the jack in his hand. But it was a new tool to him and he fumbled with it stupidly. The handle would not fit, and when it did fit it operated the wrong way.

"Oh, let me have it," she cried impatiently.

In a moment she had it set under the frame of the car and was plying the handle up and down with rapid strokes. The boy looked on, helpless and mortified. He was beginning to realize that there were more things in the world than riding a horse and shooting bottles. He felt a sudden desire to be of great service. And just now he could be of no service whatever.

But the foot of the jack began to sink in the soft earth, and the girl looked up helplessly.

"It won't lift it," she said. "What shall we do?"

It was his chance. He was eighteen, and his wild, open life had given him muscles of steel. "Here," he said roughly, "move his leg when I get it clear." He turned his back to the machine and crouched down until he could get his hands under the steel frame. Then he lifted. The car was in a somewhat poised position, and he was able to swing it up far enough to release the injured leg.

"Very good, my boy," said the man. "That was a wonderful lift. The leg is broken—compound. Can you get some way of moving me to shelter? I will pay you well."

The last words were unfortunate. Hospitality in the ranching country is not bought and sold.

"You can't pay me nothin'," he said rudely. "But I can bring a light wagon, if you can ride in that, and put you up at the ranch. The old man's soused," he added, as an afterthought, "but it's better than sleepin' out. I won't be long."

He was back at his horse, and in a moment they heard the clatter of hoofs galloping down the hillside.

The girl rested her father's head in her lap. Tears made her bright eyes brighter still.

"Don't cry, Reenie," he said gently. "We are very lucky to be so close to help. Of course I'll be laid up for a while, but it will give you a chance to see ranch life as it really is."

He winced with pain but continued: "I fancy we shall find it plain and unvarnished. What a horseman! If I could run an automobile like he does a horse we should not be here."

"He's strong," she said. "But he's rude."

"The best fields for muscle are often poor schools for manners," he answered.

The boy was soon back with a wagon and a stretcher. He avoided the eyes of his guests, but quickly and gently enough, he placed the injured man on the stretcher. "I guess you'll have to take the feet," he said. The words were for the girl although he did not look at her. "I could hustle him myself but it might hurt 'im."

But the injured man interrupted. "I beg your pardon," he said, "that I did not introduce my daughter. I am Doctor Hardy; this is my daughter Irene, Mr.—?"

"They don't call me mister," said the boy. "Misters is scarce in these woods. My name is Elden—Dave Elden."

The girl came up with extended hand. He took it shyly, but it made him curiously bold.

"I'm glad to meet you, Mr. Elden," she said.

"I'm glad to meet you, too," he answered. "Misses is scarcer than misters in this neck o' the woods."

Carefully they lifted the injured man into the wagon, and Dave drove to the ranch building with an unwonted caution that must have caused



The Animal Sprang Into the Air, Then Dashed at a Gallop Down the Roadway.

strange misgivings in the hearts of his team.

"It ain't much of a place," he said, as they pulled up at the door. "I guess you can see that for yourself," he added, with a grin. "You see there's just dad and me, and he's soused most of the time, and I handle a lasso better'n a scrubbin' brush." He was already losing his shyness. "Now you take the feet again. Steady! Look out for that barrel hoop. This way now."

He led into the old ranch house, kicking the door wider open with his heel as he passed. A partition from east to west divided the house, and another partition from north to south divided the northern half. In the northeast room they set the stretcher on the floor.

"Now," said the boy, "I'm goin' for the doctor. It's forty miles to town, and it'll likely be mornin' before I'm back, but I'll sure burn the trail. There's grub in the house, and you won't starve—that is if you can cook." (This was evidently for Irene. There was a note in it that suggested the girl might have her limitations.) "Dig

into anythin' in sight. And I hope your father's leg won't hurt very much."

"Oh, I'll stand it," said Doctor Hardy, with some cheerfulness. "We medical men become accustomed to suffering—in other people. You are very kind. My daughter may remain in this room, I suppose? There is no one else?"

"No one but the old man," he answered. "He's asleep in the next room, safe till mornin'. I'll be back by that time. That's my bed," indicating a corner. "Make yourselves at home." He lounged through the door, and they heard his spurs clanking across the hard earth.

The girl's first thought was for her father. She removed his boot and stocking, and, under his direction, slit the leg of his trousers above the injury. It was bleeding a little. In the large room of the house she found a pail of water, and she bathed the wound, wiping it with her handkerchief and mingling a tear or two with the warm blood that dripped from it. "You're good stuff," her father said, pressing the fingers of her unoccupied hand. "Now if you could find a clean cloth to bandage it—"

"Is that you, Dave?"  
"Yes, Reenie, and the doctor, too."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## QUEER CAUSES OF SNEEZING

Hard to Explain Why Simple Things Have Such a Peculiar Effect on Some Persons.

Some people sneeze for curious reasons. There is a clergyman who can never cross the road on a very hot day without carrying an umbrella. If he does, he is immediately taken with a violent fit of sneezing. Another man is similarly affected by exposure to bright gas-light.

Clergymen seem to be particularly sensitive in this direction. Another wearer of the cloth used to sneeze whenever he came near to a dead hare. A similar case is that of a young man who could never go near a horse without sneezing.

Peculiar odors have been known to cause sneezing. A druggist's wife always sneezed when ipecacuanha was being used in the shop, and another person always found sneezing necessary whenever he entered a room where there were violets. And there is an account of a well-known physician who was fond of chocolates, but could never eat one without suffering spasms of sneezing.

Perhaps the most remarkable case is that of a man who, whenever he sees a picture of a hayfield, immediately proceeds to sneeze his head nearly off.—London Tit-Bits.

### Beautiful Marine Organisms.

A beautiful marine organism which floats in tropical seas is not a single creature, but a colony of many individuals, connected with each other like Siamese twins, and of several different kinds. The largest and most brilliantly colored is inflated with gas and floats on the water surface. All the other members of the colony hang from its under side. Some are small and trumpet-shaped and do the feeding for the entire community. Others are finger-like and are "feelers." Still others resemble bunches of grapes. These are egg layers. Another kind are like long streamers and extend down into the water to act as "drag anchors." They are also armed with "sting cells" to slay young fishes, which they afterward draw up to the hungry mouths above.

### Beverage of Pine Balsam.

The threatened emptiness of "the cup that cheers, but not inebriates," reminds a correspondent that Cowper was less original than many readers suppose in framing that line.

Long before his time, Bishop Berkeley applied the same encomium to a drink made of pine balsam, in these terms:

"The luminous spirit lodged and detained in the native balsam of pines and firs is of a nature so mild and benign, and proportioned to the human constitution as to warm without heating, to cheer but not inebriate, and to produce a calm and steady joy like the effect of good news, without that sinking of spirits which is a subsequent effect on all fermented cordials."

### Biddy's Reasoning.

Mistress—I'm afraid my poor, darling, little Topsy will never recover. Do you know, Bridget, I think the kindest thing would be to have her chloroformed and put out of her misery.

Bridget—I wouldn't do that, mum. Sure, she might get better, after all, an' then ye'd be sorry ye had her killed.—Boston Evening Transcript.

### Durable Male Beauty.

One reason why a man doesn't look into a mirror as often as a woman does is because he has more confidence in the durability of his beauty.—Galveston News.

## STATE NEWS IN BRIEF.

Kelso.—The Crescent Shingle company mill has shut down for two weeks while a new high pressure boiler is being installed in the fireroom. A new planer with a capacity up to 8x24 will be installed in the Thompson-Ford Lumber company mill.

Olympia.—Mrs. R. C. McCredie of Sunnyside was elected president of the state board of health at the annual meeting of the board held here. Mrs. McCredie succeeds Dr. H. H. McCarthy of Spokane, whose term as a member of the board expired December 31.

Seattle.—Washington's honey production totaled \$500,000 in value during 1919, but this figure is expected to be trebled during 1920, members of the Washington State Bee Keepers' association were told at the opening session here of their annual convention.

Seattle.—Edwin Selvin, editor of the Business Chronicle, charged with violation of the state criminal syndicalism law, must stand trial on the charges, Boyd Tallman, superior judge, ruled Tuesday when he overruled a demurrer interposed by defense counsel.

Vancouver.—Articles of incorporation have been prepared and will be filed by the Medford Gas & Oil company, with a capitalization of \$500,000, this city to be the principal place of business. The company is organized to drill for oil and gas in Oregon, in the vicinity of Medford.

Olympia.—Application for increase in street-car fares in the cities of Hoquiam, Aberdeen and Cosmopolis is made by the Grays Harbor Railway & Light company in a new tariff filed with the public service commission Friday. The company asks for a 7-cent fare within the cities and 10 cents between cities.

Spokane.—A movement which it hopes will assume national proportions was inaugurated by the Spokane Retail Clothiers' association Saturday, when it adopted a resolution calling upon every dealer in men's apparel to buy the minimum of merchandise for the fall trade, with the object of restricting buying in order to bring down the cost of men's clothing.

Yakima.—Merrill Nibley, assistant general manager of the Utah-Idaho Sugar company who is here looking into the question of the 1920 price for sugar beets, said he felt certain the price of beet sugar would advance to meet that of cane sugar. "Why should we sell our sugar for a low price when the foreigner, whose cost of production is lower than ours, is permitted to sell his product for a high price?" Mr. Nibley asked.

Pullman.—Before a packed auditorium, Aaron Sapiro of San Francisco last week outlined his plan for the co-operative marketing of wheat by the Washington Wheat Growers' association. "Stop marketing your own wheat, give all your attention to the production of wheat and hire some one who can make the selling game his business to sell it for you." This was the keynote of the advice that Sapiro had to offer the convention.

Olympia.—The industrial insurance commission is living up to the motto "hire a service man" almost 100 per cent. Since September there has been 16 vacancies on the commission. Two of these were filled by Governor Louis F. Hart, who appointed ex-service men, Colonel Fred W. Lewellyn and Captain E. K. Brown, as commissioners, and they have followed out his policy by appointing 13 other former service men to vacancies that existed.

Olympia.—According to announcement made by Mrs. Josephine Corliss Preston, state superintendent of public instruction, apportionment of school funds for January totals \$713,327. Apportionment is made in January, April, May, June, July and October of each year. The apportionment made for January, 1920, is \$165,115.85 more than it was for January last year. The large apportionment is due to the fact that the state auditor's office, through the various city treasurers' offices, has collected a large amount of outstanding taxes. Some of the larger apportionments follow: King county, \$160,177; Pierce county, \$67,440; Grays Harbor county, \$22,469; Lewis county, \$25,666; Spokane county, \$74,008; Whatcom county, \$30,649; Thurston county, \$12,995; Walla Walla county, \$16,536.