The Cow Puncher

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DAVE AND EDITH.

Synopsis.—David Elden, son of a drunken, shiftless ranchman, almost a maverick of the foothills, is breaking bottles with his pistol from his running cayuse when the first automobile he has ever seen arrives and tips over, breaking the leg of Doctor Hardy but not injuring his beautiful daughter Irene. Dave rescues the injured man and brings a doctor from 40 miles away. Irene takes charge of the housekeeping. Dave and Irene take many rides together and during her father's enforced stay they get well acquainted. They part with a kiss and an implied promise. Dave's father dies and Dave goes to town to seek his fortune. A man named Conward teaches him his first lessons in city ways. Dave has a narrow escape, is disgusted and turns over a new leaf. Fate brings him into contact with Melvin Duncan, who sees the inherent good in the boy and welcomes him to his home, where he meets Edith, his host's pretty daughter.

CHAPTER V—Continued.

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Dave's energy and enthusiasm in the warehouse soon brought him promotion from truck hand to shipping clerk, with an advance in wages to sixty-five dollars a month. He was prepared to remain in this position for some time, as he knew that promotion depends on many things besides ability. Mr. Duncan had warned him against the delusion that man is entirely master of his destiny.

But Dave was not to continue in the grocery trade. A few evenings later he was engaged in reading in the public library. Mr. Duncan had directed him into the realm of fiction and poetry, and he was now feeling his way through "Hamlet." On the evening in question an elderly man engaged him in conversation.

"You are a Shakespearean student, I see?"

"Not exactly. I read a little in the evenings."

"I have seen you here different times. Are you well acquainted with the town?"

"Pretty well," said Dave, scenting that there might be a purpose in the questioning.

"Working now?"

Dave told him where he was employed.

"I am the editor of the Call," said the elderly man. "We need another man on the street; a reporter, you know. We pay twenty-five dollars a week for such a position. If you are interested you might call at the office tomorrow."

Dave hurried with his problem to Mr. Duncan. "I think I'd like the work," he said, "but I am not sure whether I can do it. My writing is rather—wonderful."

Mr. Duncan turned the matter over in his mind. "Yes," he said at length, "but I notice you are beginning to use the typewriter. When you learn that God gave you ten fingers, not two, you may make a typist. And there is nothing more worth while than being able to express yourself in English. They'll teach you that on a newspaper. I think I'd take it.

"Not on account of the money," he continued, after a little. "You would probably soon be earning more in the wholesale business. Newspaper men are about the worst paid of all professions. But it's the best training in the world, not for itself but as a step to something else. The training is worth while, and it's the training you want. Take it."

Dave explained his disadvantages to the editor of the Call. "I didn't want you to think," he said, with great frankness, "that because I was reading Shakespeare I was a master of English. And I guess if I were to write up stuff in Hamlet's language I'd get canned for it."

"We'd probably have a deputation from the Moral Reform league," said the editor with a dry smile. "Just the same, if you know Shakespeare you know English, and we'll soon break you into the newspaper style."

So almost before he knew it Dave was on the staff of the Call. His beat comprised the police court, fire department, hotels and general pick-ups.

Dave almost immediately found the need of acquaintanceships. The isolation of his boyhood had bred in him qualities of aloofness which had now to be overcome. He was not naturally a good "mixer;" he preferred his own company, but his own company would not bring him much news. So he set about deliberately to cultivate acquaintance with the members of the police force and the fire brigade and the clerks in the hotels. And he had in his character a quality of sincerity which gave him almost instant admission into their friendships. He had not suspected the charm of his own personality, and its discovery, feeding upon his new born enthusiasm for friendships, still further enriched the charm.

As his acquaintance with the work of the police force increased Dave found his attitude toward moral principles in need of frequent readjustment. By no means a Puritan, he had nevertheless two sterling qualities which so far had saved him from any very serious misstep. He practiced absolute honesty in all his relationships. His father, drunken although he was in his later years, had never quite lost his sense of commercial uprightness, and Dave had inherited the quality in full degree. And Reenie Hardy had come into his life just when he needed a girl like Reenie Hardy to come into his life. . . . He often thought of Reenie Hardy, and of her compact with him, and wondered what the end would be. He was glad he had met Reenie Hardy. She was an anchor about his soul. . . . And Edith Duncan.

While the gradually deepening current of Dave's life flowed through the channels of coal heaver, freight handler, shipping clerk and reporter its waters were sweetened by the intimate relationship which developed between him and the members of the Duncan household. He continued his studies under Mr. Duncan's directions; two, three, and even four nights in the week found him at work in the comfortable den, or, during the warm weather, on the screened porch that overlooked the family garden. Mrs. Duncan, motherly, and yet not too motherly—she might almost have been an older sister—appealed to the young man as an ideal of womanhood. Her soft, well-modulated voice seemed to him to express the perfect harmony of the perfect home, and underneath its even tones he caught glimpses of a reserve of power and judgment not easily unbalanced. And as Dave's eyes would follow her the tragedy of his own orphaned life bore down upon him and he rebelled that he had been denied the start which such a mother could have given him.

"I am twenty years behind myself," he would reflect, with a grim smile. "Never mind. I will do three men's work for the next ten, and then we will be even."

And there was Edith—Edith who had burst so unexpectedly upon his life that first evening in her father's home. He had not allowed himself any foolishness about Edith. It was

"Well?" Queried the Girl, and There Was a Note in Her Voice That Sounded Strange to Him.

evident Edith was pre-empted, just as he was pre-empted, and the part of honor in his friend's house was to recognize the status quo. . . . Still, Mr. Allan Forsyth was unnecessarily self-assured. He might have made it less evident that he was within the enchanted circle while Dave remained outside. His complacence irritated Dave almost into rivalry. But the bon camaraderie of Edith herself checked any adventure of that kind. She was of about the same figure as Reenie Hardy—a little slighter perhaps; and about the same age; and she had the same quick, frank eyes. And she sang wonderfully. He had never heard Reenie sing, but in some strange way he had formed a deep conviction that she would sing much as Edith sang. In love, as in religion, man is forever setting up idols to represent his ideals—and forever finding feet of clay.

Dave was not long in discovering that his engagement as coachman was a device, born of Mr. Duncan's kindness, to enable him to accept instruction without feeling under obligation for it. When he made this discovery he smiled quietly to himself and pretended not to have made it. To have acted otherwise would have seemed ungrateful to Mr. Duncan. And presently the drives began to have a strange attraction of themselves.

When they drove in the two-seated buggy on Sunday afternoons the party usually comprised Mrs. Duncan and Edith, young Forsyth and Dave. Mr. Duncan was interested in certain Sunday-afternoon meetings. It was Mrs. Duncan's custom to sit in the rear seat for its better riding qualities, and it had a knack of falling about that Edith would ride in the front seat with the driver. She caused Forsyth to ride with her mother, ostensibly as a courtesy to that young gentleman—a courtesy which, it may be conjectured, was not fully appreciated. At first he accepted it with the good nature of one who feels his position secure, but gradually that good nature gave way to a certain testiness of spirit which he could not entirely conceal. . . .

The crisis was precipitated one fine Sunday in September, in the first year of Dave's newspaper experience. Dave called early and found Edith in a riding habit.

"Mother is 'indisposed,' as they say in the society page," she explained. "In other words, she doesn't wish to be bothered. So I thought we would ride today."

"But there are only two horses," said Dave.

"Well?" queried the girl, and there was a note in her voice that sounded strange to him. "There are only two of us."

"But Mr. Forsyth?"

"He is not here. He may not come. Will you saddle the horses and let us get away?"

It was evident to Dave that for some reason Edith wished to evade Forsyth this afternoon. A lovers' quarrel, no doubt. That she had a preference for him and was revealing it with the utmost frankness never occurred to his sturdy, honest mind. One of the delights of his companionship with Edith had been that it was a real companionship. None of the limitations occasioned by any sex consciousness had narrowed the sphere of the frank friendship he felt for her. She was to him almost as another man, yet in no sense masculine. Save for a certain tender delicacy which her womanhood inspired, he came and went with her as he might have done with a man chum of his own age. And when she preferred to ride without Forsyth it did not occur to Elden that she preferred to ride with him.

They were soon in the country, and Edith, leading, swung from the road to a bridle trail that followed the winding of the river. As her graceful figure drifted on ahead it seemed more than ever reminiscent of Reenie Hardy. What rides they had had on those foothill trails! What dippings into the great canyons! What adventures into the spruce forests! And how long ago it all seemed! This girl, riding ahead, suggestive in every curve and pose of Reenie Hardy. . . . His eyes were burning with loneliness.

He knew he was dull that day, and Edith was particularly charming and vivacious. She coaxed him into conversation a dozen times, but he answered absent-mindedly. At length she leaped from her horse and seated herself, facing the river, on a fallen log. Without looking back she indicated with her hand the space beside her, and Dave followed and sat down.

"You aren't talking today," she said. "You don't quite do yourself justice. What's wrong?"

"Oh, nothing!" he answered, with a laugh, pulling himself together. "This September weather always gets me. I guess I have a streak of Indian; it comes of being brought up on the ranges. And in September, after the first frosts have touched the foliage—" He paused, as though it was not necessary to say more.

"Yes, I know," she said quietly. Then, with a queer little note of confidence, "Don't apologize for it, Dave."

"Apologize?" and his form straightened. "Certainly not. . . . One doesn't apologize for nature, does he? . . . But it comes back in September."

He smiled, and she thought the subconscious in him was calling up the smell of fire in dry grass, or perhaps even the rumble of buffalo over the hills. And he knew he smiled because he had so completely misled her.

. . . It was dusk when they started homeward.

Forsyth was waiting for her. Dave scented stormy weather and excused himself early.

"What does this mean?" demanded Forsyth angrily as soon as Dave had gone. "Do you think I will take second place to that—that coal heaver?"

"That is not to his discredit," she said.

"Straight from the corrals into good society," Forsyth sneered.

Then she made no pretense of composure. "If you have nothing more to urge against Mr. Elden perhaps you will go."

Forsyth took his hat. At the door he paused and turned, but she was already ostensibly interested in a magazine. He went out into the night.

The week was a busy one with Dave and he had no opportunity to visit the Duncans. Friday Edith called him on the telephone. She asked an inconsequential question about something which had appeared in the paper, and from that the talk drifted on until it turned on the point of their expedition of the previous Sunday. Dave never could account quite clearly how it happened, but when he hung up the receiver he knew he had asked her to ride with him again on Sunday, and she had accepted. He had ridden with her before, of course, but he had never asked her before. He felt that a subtle change had come over their relationship.

The way of a maid with a man.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Nature means necessity.—Bailey.

TWO OF A KIND

By GEORGE E. STREETER

(Copyright.)

He sat in front of the post office every working day throughout the year. No one seemed to know his real name, but the townspeople called him Armless John, and being otherwise remarkable for a peculiar kind of stammer, he was for some years the object of pity. Around his neck he wore a sign bearing the following rather ambiguous appeal:

KIND FRIENDS
Please help a POOR man
WILLING but UNABLE
to work with a LARGE FAMILY.

According to his own statements he had lost his arms in a variety of ways; the juvenile population had been informed that sharks—or bears—had eaten his lost arms; to very old and simple-minded ladies it was "fire-damp," or "on the railway," or just "cannibals." He had also "fallen from the mast-head," "dropped out of a balloon," and "got caught in an elevator." Sometimes his loss had occurred while "fighting in Cuba," or engaged in "blasting rocks in California." In fact, of "moving accidents," Armless John was a long way ahead of Othello.

His memory being somewhat treacherous, he sometimes had to listen to this kind of a remark:

"Why! you told me last month that you lost your arms in Peru—now you say it was in Australia; you must either be lying, or had a lot of arms to start with."

To all such personal and unkind observations, the stammering beggar would reply somewhat like this:

"Wa-wa-wasn't I in-sen-si-ble at the ti-ti-ti—at the time? How'd d'ye s-s-spose—" (He had a habit of breaking off like that.) "But I lost 'em, you b-b-bet."

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A man of perhaps fifty years of age, shabbily dressed, stopped one morning in front of Armless John.

"Nice morning," said the stranger.

"Fi-fi-fine, sir," agreed John.

"Yours is a bad case, my friend," rejoined the other.

"T-t-terrible, sir."

"How did you lose your arms?"

"Gun p-p-powder explosion at Mel-mel-bourne."

"Australia?"

The beggar shook his head.

"That's my native place," added the stranger.

"I don't mean there. Mel-mel-bourne in Kentucky is the p-p-place, all right."

"You're a liar, Phillips. Do you know Sing Sing?" asked the man.

"Never there," answered John, now looking for the first time in the other man's face.

"Yes, you were, my friend. You and I spent about five years there. What an old fraud you are! How do you manage to dispose of your arms like that?"

John was speechless, as well as stammerless, though still apparently armless.

"I hope ye won't squeal on me, Tom?" he remarked.

"That all depends. Have you got a large family, as the sign says?" inquired Tom.

"There's six of us altogether, including the dogs."

"Well, you'll have to pay me so much a week, and I won't say a word," replied the other.

"There ain't enough comin' in to do that," said John dolefully.

"Something must be done," remarked Tom. "I haven't got work, and I can't get any."

"Suppose you come up to the house tonight, and we'll talk things over. Go away now, Tom, do; see you tonight."

The stranger moved away slowly, remarking to an old lady about to drop a coin in the little tin mug: "That's a bad case, mum; the poor fellow lost his arms falling off the roof of a church."

"Did he, indeed?" sympathetically said the lady. "I always give him a trifle when I pass, but I thought he lost his arms in battle."

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The ex-convicts were holding a midnight session.

"I've thought out a scheme, Tom, which will pay us both, and we'll be independent of each other. Suppose you go and stand at the library, and be a blind man. There isn't such a fellow in the place. Every day one of the children can bring your dinner down to you, and also lead you home at night. I'm sure you'll make more than I do."

"Don't suit me," answered Tom. "I ain't a-going to keep my eyes shut all day. I think I'd better be a one-armed sailor, suffering from a shark-bite."

"That'll never do," said John. "I'm in the shark business at times, you know. The blind dodge is the only one any good, so far as I can see. I believe there's a fortune in being a 'Poor Blind Man.'"

"I can't see it," answered the doubting Thomas.

"You're not supposed to see anything," replied John, with a laugh, which the other did not relish.

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In a few days there appeared a totally sightless man in town, carrying a small, simple sign—

PITY THE BLIND

His first day was very wearisome, but Tom got through it all right, and had a good many coins as a result. He did well, and very soon the receipts of Armless John fell off.

"Tom's simply doing my business," said John to his wife one evening. "All the long day women come to me, and speak of the poor blind man' who lost his sight through reading a Bible with too close print. I wish somethin'd happen to him."

Strange as it may seem, but within a week, while the little girl was handing something to eat to the blind man, Towser, the dog, caught Tom by the leg and caused that victim of close biblical study not only to shout and use sundry passages not found in any volume, but also led him to open his eyes, in the presence of a wondering and sarcastic crowd, including an officer of the law, who at once took charge of the sham Bartimeus, and introduced him next day to the magistrate.

"Charge of vagrancy, your honor. Been pretendin' to be blind, your honor, but I've been suspecting him for days. Yesterday a dog bit him, and he opened his eyes, and when he saw me he started to run away, your honor?"

"Whose dog was it?" asked the judge, detecting the possibility of another case.

"Belonged to a little girl, your honor; daughter of that no-armed man," replied the officer.

The judge lectured Tom and imposed a sentence of three months in jail, and warned him that should the dog die, the owner, "that poor cripple," would have remedy against him at civil law.

"'That poor cripple,' as you call him," said Tom, "has got arms."

"This is strange," said the judge. "Constable, inquire into this, and if you find the prisoner's story true, bring that other fraud before me tomorrow."

Constable Flynn "inquired" into the matter, and found that Armless John, Mrs. Armless John, and family had left town the previous evening, shortly after the arrest of Thomas.

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Now, gentle reader:

This tale offers the following for the consideration of a gullible and patient people:

1. Fakers are takers—but take 'em easy.
2. Beware of the Dog—and the POOR BLIND MAN.
3. Be sure your FRIENDS will find you out.
4. The "far-seeing" public is—oh, so blind.
5. Help others out—of town.

HELPED BURGLAR TO ESCAPE

Four-Year-Old Miss Is Regretting That She Was So Polite to Her Visitor.

Burglars always have been the pet aversion of Margaret Bearsley of Omaha, eight years of age. She admits she is just scared to death of a burglar.

When it was too late to play Margaret slipped into her pajamas and crept up on the ledge in the upper room to rest.

Looking up from the wallpaper sample book with which she was amusing herself Margaret detected a strange man stealthily in the doorway. He wore a workman's cap, overall and carried some electric light cords.

"Oh," he said pleasantly, "I'm the electric light man. I've come to inspect the lights and I got all of mixed up in the rooms."

"I'll show you the way," volunteered Margaret, and she jumped up, slipped on a tiny kimono and escorted the electric light man all through the upstairs. Now the police are looking for the man with a black cap and two electric light cords and Margaret's family call her "the burglar's pal."

An Indian Santa

The jolly Old Santa Claus of glad children did not visit the Indian reservation in central New Jersey last year. In his stead there was a real Indian Santa with a headgear of feathers and other garments worn by Indians when Santa first came to America. He was trimmed with corn instead of holly in place of a whip, which to the Indian children means cruelty, he carried a corn stalk to drive his team.

None of the little red children on the bleak reservation were forgotten. He left them arrows, from snakes, corn bread stuffed with fruit, cookies shaped like pine trees and chipmunks and a kind of sausage made from the livers of wild animals. Honey made up for the lack of sugar. Syracuse churches, the Indian Welfare Society and other allied organizations were active in preparing this Christmas.

Stirred Up a Pudding.

One Sunday some friends of ours were spending the day with us. While I was preparing dinner her woman came into the kitchen and asked me if there was anything she could do to help me. I told her she could stir up a chocolate pudding. She fixed it and when it came time for our dessert my husband, who is always saying things he hadn't ought to, remarked: "Edith, this is the poorest pudding I ever knew you to make."—Exchange.

Tact.

"I suppose my biscuits are not like the ones your mother used to make."

"Of course, they are not, my dear. Yours are fit to eat."

PROFITS FROM SWEET POTATO

Question of Proper Handling of Crop Deserves More Attention.

RESENTS ROUGH TREATMENT

One of the Big Drawbacks to Industry Is Inability of Farmer to Keep Tubers in Storage—Field Diseases Are Serious.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Sweet potatoes deserve as careful handling as apples. In fact, they will not stand the rough handling that apples are often subjected to in grading and packing.

This statement may surprise many sweet potato growers who are not in the habit of taking pains to avoid bruising this product. The question of proper handling of sweet potatoes is one of several points touched on in a publication just issued by the bureau of plant industry of the United States department of agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1050, entitled "Sweet Potato Diseases."

One of the chief barriers to the extension of sweet potato growing in this country is the inability of farmers to keep sweet potatoes in storage so that they can be placed on the market in winter when prices are good. Consequently most of the crop grown is consumed locally or sold at digging time when prices are low. A few sweet potatoes go to northern markets in winter, and even in the South they cannot be obtained with any degree of certainty at that season. Specialists of the department of agriculture believe that if storage methods and principles were better understood far more sweet potatoes would be available for winter use.

Must Fight Diseases.

However, the success of the industry does not depend on careful handling alone. There are several serious field diseases, as this bulletin points out, the best known of which are black rot, stem rot and foot rot. The storage of sweet potatoes affected with black rot must necessarily result in heavy loss, since the disease spreads rapidly throughout the bins. Stem rot, on the other hand, does not produce any marked decay in storage, but it may open the way for storage rot organisms to enter the potato.

After sweet potatoes are dry and the surface moisture has dried off they should be carefully laid in containers holding about a bushel and hauled to a storage house. If the potatoes are to be stored in bins they should be poured carefully from the containers into the bins. There are some advantages in storing in crates rather than in bins. Crates permit

A Field of Sweet Potatoes, the Raising of Which Can Be Made Highly Profitable.

the free circulation of air among the potatoes, a condition which cannot be so readily obtained if they are piled in a bin. The crate has an added advantage in that by its use as many potatoes can be taken out for the market at any one time during the winter as are desired without disturbing the remainder. Sweet potatoes will not stand frequent handling, and for that reason it is unwise to disturb a pile or bin unless they are all marketed at the same time.

Dig Late for Storage.

Potatoes intended for storage should be dug as late in the fall as is consistent with weather conditions. This is usually just preceding frost or after the first light frost. Frozen potatoes will not keep, and it is likely that a heavy frost will injure them to some extent. It is advisable after a heavy frost to cut the vines at once and dig. To wait too long may mean that in order to avoid freezes the potatoes must be dug during bad weather. After the potatoes are dug they should be left exposed long enough to dry off the surface moisture. On a bright day this would require but an hour or two. On a very hot day, however, it would be desirable to hurry the potatoes to the shade after their surfaces have been dried in the sun.

Full details on storing sweet potatoes are contained in Farmers' Bulletin No. 970 of the United States department of agriculture.