



The COW PUNCHER

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DAVE BECOMES WEALTHY.

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. Their 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 lesson 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. Dave becomes a newspaper reporter and advances rapidly to a position of responsibility.

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

During the following days Dave had a keener eye than usual for evidences of "industrial development." He found them on every hand. Old properties, long considered unsalable, were changing owners. Money moved easily; wages were stiffening; tradesmen were in demand. There was material for many good stories in his investigations. He began writing features on the city's prosperity and prospects. The rival paper did the same and there was soon started between them a competition of optimism. The great word became "boom." The virus was now in the veins of the community, pulsing through every street and byway of the little city. Dave marveled, and wondered how he had failed to read these signs until Conward had laid their portent bare before him. But as yet it was only his news sense that responded; his delight in the strange and the sensational. He was not yet inoculated with the poison of easy wealth.

His nights were busy with his investigations, but on Sunday, as usual, he went out to the Duncans'. Mrs. Duncan explained that Edith had gone to visit a girl friend in the country; would be gone away for some time. Dave felt a foolish annoyance that she should have left town. She might at least have called him up. Why should she call him up? Of course not! Still, the town was very empty. He drove with Mrs. Duncan in the afternoon, and at night took a long walk by the river. He had a vague but oppressive sense of loneliness. He had not realized what part of his life these Sunday afternoons with Edith had come to be.

A few days later Conward strolled in, with the inevitable cigarette. He smoked in silence until Dave completed a story.

"Good stuff you're giving us," he commented, when the article was finished. "Remember what I told you the other day? It's just like putting a match to tinder. Now we're off."

Conward smoked a few minutes in silence, but Dave could not fail to see the excitement under his calm exterior. He had, as he said, decided to "sit" in the biggest game ever played. The intoxication of sudden wealth had already fired his blood.

He slipped a bill to Dave. "For your services in that little transaction," he explained.

Elden held the bill in his fingers gingerly, as though it might carry infection, as in very truth it did. He realized that he stood at a turning-point—that everything the future held for him might rest on his present decision. There remained in him not a little of the fine, stern honor of the ranchman of the open range; an honor curious, sometimes terrible, in its interpretation of right and wrong, but a



"I Can't Take That Much," He Exclaimed. "It Isn't Fair."

fine, stern honor nevertheless. And he instinctively felt that to accept this money would compromise him for evermore. As he turned the bill in his fingers he noticed that it was for one hundred dollars. He thought it was ten.

"I can't take that much," he exclaimed. "It isn't fair."

"Fair enough," said Conward, well pleased that Dave should be impressed by his generosity. "Fair enough," he

repeated. "It's just ten per cent of my profit."

"You mean you made a thousand dollars on that deal?"

"Exactly that. And that will look like a pennut to what we are going to make later on."

"We?"

"Yes. You and me. We're going into partnership."

"But I've nothing to invest. I've only a very little saved up."

"Invest that hundred."

Dave looked at Conward sharply. Was he trifling? No, his eyes were frank and serious.

"You mean it?"

"Of course. Now, I'll put you onto something, and it's the biggest thing that has been pulled off yet. There's a section of land lying right against the city limits that is owned by a fellow over in England; remittance man who fell heir to an estate and had to go home to spend it. I am arranging through a London office to offer him ten dollars an acre, and I'll bet he jumps at it. I've arranged for the necessary credits, but there will be some expenses for cables, etc., and you can put your hundred into that. If we pull it off—and we will pull it off—we start up in business as Conward & Elden, or Elden & Conward, whichever sounds better. Boy, there's a fortune in it."

"What do you figure it's worth?" said Dave, trying to speak easily. "Twenty-five dollars an acre?"

"Twenty-five dollars an acre!" Conward shouted. "Dave, newspaper routine has killed your imagination. Twenty-five dollars an acre! Listen!

"The city boundaries are to be extended—probably will be by the time this deal goes through. Then it is city property. A street-railway system is to be built, and we'll see that it runs through our land. We may have to 'grease' somebody, but it's a poor engineer that saves on grease. Then we'll survey that section into twenty-five-foot lots—and we'll sell them at two hundred dollars each for those nearest the city down to one hundred for those farthest out—average one hundred and fifty—total nine hundred and sixty thousand dollars. Allow, say, sixty thousand for grease and there is still nine hundred thousand, and that doesn't count resale commissions. Dave, it's good for a cool million."

Dave was doing rapid thinking. Suddenly he faced Conward and their eyes met. "Conward," he said, "you don't need my little hundred to put this over. Why do you let me in on it?"

Conward smiled and breathed easily. There had been a moment of tension. "Oh, that's simple," he answered. "I figure we'll travel well in double harness. I'm a good mixer—I know people—and I've got ideas. And you're sound and honorable and people trust you."

"Thanks," said Dave, dryly. "That's right," Conward continued. "We'll be a combination hard to beat."

Dave had never felt sure of Conward, and now he felt less sure than ever. But the lust of easy money was beginning to stir within him. The bill in his hands represented more than three weeks' wages. Conward was making money—making money fast, and surely here was an opportunity such as comes once in a lifetime.

"I'll go you," he said to Conward, at last. "I'll risk this hundred, and a little more, if necessary."

"Good," said Conward, springing to his feet and taking Dave's hand in a warm grasp. "Now we're away. But you better play safe. Stick to your paycheck here until we pull the deal through. There won't be much to do until then, anyway, and you can help more by guiding the paper along right lines."

"It sounds like a fairy tale," Dave demurred, as though unwilling to credit the possibilities Conward had outlined. "You're sure it can be done?"

"Done? Why, son, it has been done in all the big centers in the States, and at many a place that'll never be a center at all. And it will be done here. Dave, bigger things than you dare dream of are looming up right ahead."

CHAPTER VII.

David Elden smoked his after-dinner cigar in his bachelor quarters. The years had been good to the firm of Conward & Elden; good far beyond the wildest of their first dreams. The transaction of the section bought from the English absentee had been but the beginning of bigger and more daring adventures. Conward, in that first wild prophecy of his, had spoken of a city of a quarter of a million people; already more lots had been sold than could be occupied by four times that population.

Dave had often asked himself where it all would end.

The firm of Conward & Elden had profited not the least in the wild years of gain-getting. Their mahogany-finished first-floor quarters were the last word in office luxuriance. Conward's private room might with credit have housed a premier or a president. Its purpose was to be impressive rather than to give any other service, as Conward spent little of his time there. On Dave fell the responsibility of office management, and his room was fitted for efficiency rather than luxury. It

commanded a view of the long general office where a battery of stenographers and clerks took care of the details of the business of Conward & Elden. And Dave had established his ability as an office manager. His fairness, his fearlessness, his impartiality, his courtesy, his even temper—save on rare and excusable occasions—had won from the staff a loyalty which Conward, with all his abilities as a good mixer, could never have commanded.

He had prospered, of course. His statement to his banker ran into seven figures. Dave was still a young man, not yet in his thirties; he was rated a millionaire; he had health, comeliness, and personality; he commanded the respect of a wide circle of business men, and was regarded as one of the matrimonial prizes of the city; his name had been discussed for public office; he was a success.

And yet this night, as he sat in his comfortable rooms and watched the street lights come fluttering on as twilight silhouetted the great hills to the west, he was not so sure of his success. He was called a success, yet in the honesty of his own soul he feared the coin did not ring true. He felt that the crude but honest conception of the square deal which was the one valuable heritage of his childhood was slipping away from him. He had little in common with Conward outside of



"It Would Be Mean to Put Over Anything Like That on a Man, and a Girl Wouldn't Have Me."

their business relationship. He suspected the man vaguely, but had never found tangible ground for his suspicion.

He was turning the matter over in his mind and wondering what the end would be, when a knock came at the door.

"Come," he said, switching on the light. "Oh, it's you, Bert! I'm honored. Sit down."

Roberta Morrison threw her coat over a chair and sank into another. Without speaking, she extended her shapely feet to the fire, but when its soothing warmth had comforted her limbs she looked up and said:

"Adam sure put it over on us, didn't he?"

"Still nursing that grievance over your sex?" laughed Dave. "I thought you would outgrow it."

"I don't blame him," continued the girl, ignoring his interruption. "I am just getting back from forty-seven teas. Gabbie, gabbie, gabbie. I don't blame him. We deserve it."

"Then you have had nothing to eat?"

"Almost. Only insignificant indigestibles—"

Dave pressed a button, and a Chinese boy (all male Chinese are boys) entered.

"Bring something to eat. Go out for it, and be quick. For two."

"You've had your dinner, surely?" asked Bert.

"Such a dinner as a man eats alone," he answered. "Now for something real. You stick to the paper like the ink, don't you, Bert?"

"Can't leave it. I hate it—and I love it. It's my poison and my medicine. Most of all I hate the society twaddle. And, of course, that's what I have to do."

"Bert," Dave said, suddenly, "why don't you get married?"

"Who, me?" Then she laughed. "It would be mean to put over anything like that on a man, and a girl wouldn't have me."

"Well, then, why don't you buy some real estate?" he continued, jocularly. "Every man should have some dissipation—something to make him forget his other troubles."

"A little late in the meal for that word, isn't it? But the fact is, I have invested."

A look came into his face which she did not understand. "With whom?" he demanded, almost peremptorily.

"With Conward & Elden," she answered, and the rogishness of her voice suggested that her despised femininity lay not far from the surface. "Were you about to be jealous?"

"Why didn't you come to me?" She realized that he was in deep earnest. "I did," she answered candidly. "At least, I asked for you, but you were out of town, so Conward took me in hand and I followed his advice."

"Do you trust Conward?" he demanded, almost fiercely.

"Well, he's good enough to be your partner, isn't he?"

The thrust hurt more than she knew. He had his poise again.

Now we pick up Irene Hardy again.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The smallest known bird is a Central American hummingbird that is about as large as a blue bottle fly.

The SANDMAN STORY

PUSS, MOUSE, A SPIDER.

BROWN MOUSE came out of his hole in the wall, which landed him right on a shelf in the pantry. The hole was hidden by pans, and Brown Mouse never thought of such a thing as that the pans might be moved.

One day he was held enough to run out in the daytime and stayed, and getting a bad fright from seeing Puss come into the pantry, he ran out of the door into the kitchen and out into the yard.

Here he managed to escape by running under the steps, where Puss could not follow him.

All day he stayed there and all night, too, and it was not until the next day that he could get back to his own home.

But what was his surprise, when he went to the hole in the wall to find



the pan had been removed and that Madam Spider had woven a web right over the opening and was sitting there, waiting for a stray fly.

"You have closed up the door to my house," protested Brown Mouse. "I am afraid I shall have to tear away your web, for I really must get in. You know, it isn't safe for me to be out here!"

"Oh, dear, what shall I do?" wailed Madam Spider. "It took me so long to find this place, and I worked so hard to weave this beautiful pattern, and now you are going to destroy it."

"Of course I cannot protect myself against such a big, strong animal as you, Mr. Mouse, so I must submit. Oh, dear; oh, dear; how miserable I am."

Mr. Mouse grew thoughtful. "I

suppose I am big and strong and ought not to take advantage of such a little frail creature as she is," he thought. "I will break down her home."

"Don't worry, Madam Spider," said Mr. Mouse. "I am right where you are. I can easily make another home by night time, and I do not think Puss will get me up here, so make yourself easy; your home shall not be destroyed."

Madam Spider said she could never thank him enough and off he ran to make a new door to his home in the wall.

Some time after this all happened Mr. Mouse grew bold again and ran out of the pantry one day and Puss saw him.

Around the kitchen she chased him, and by and by she had him cornered. He could not get back to the pantry, and Puss was very sure of getting him, so she sat quite still and watched poor trembling Mr. Mouse, who was sure his end was near.

But he had a friend close by, though he did not know it, for right over Puss' head was the new home of Madam Spider, and when she looked down and saw what was going on she knew it was time to pay her debt of gratitude to Mr. Mouse.

Madam Spider let herself down by a slender thread right over Puss. Then she swung herself right into one of Puss' eyes.

Puss bent her head and brushed her eyes with one paw. It took only a wink of time, but it was enough. Mr. Mouse was saved, for when Puss opened her eyes again he was gone.

Madam Spider, too, was safe up in her home again, feeling very contented, for had she not saved the life of Mr. Mouse, who once had spared her home?

That night, when Mr. Mouse was thinking over all that had happened, he suddenly remembered the Spider that saved him.

"Why, I do believe it must have been Madam Spider, whose home I spared a long time ago," he said. "Well, well! You can never tell when you will need a friend, and even the weakest ones sometimes are able to do the biggest deeds of kindness."

(Copyright.)

HOW THEY VOTED

"How did you two vote in the late election?"

"Well, Brown here knew Smith, so he voted for Jones. I knew Jones so I voted for Smith."

A Misconception.

"Give me a dollar's worth of belladonna, please."

"A dollar's worth of belladonna! What in the world do you want with that much of such a drug?"

"I'm sick and tired of teaching kindergarten, and somebody told me belladonna would enlarge the pupils."

CROSBY'S KIDS

IT NEVER RAINS BUT IT POURS

What the Sphinx Says

By Newton Newkirk.

"Small wonder life is miserable to a misfit—often if the preacher could swap jobs with the man, both might be happy."

Small Farms in Egypt.

Seventy-five per cent of the land under cultivation in Egypt is held by persons owning less than two acres.

Now we pick up Irene Hardy again.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The smallest known bird is a Central American hummingbird that is about as large as a blue bottle fly.

Horticultural Advice

HOW TO AVOID APPLE SCALD

Scientists Have Discovered That Certain Fats and Oils Reduce Disease to Minimum.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Most people have learned that if they sleep in an unventilated room, they poison themselves with the gas exhaled in their own breath. But it probably has not occurred to many people that apples asleep or semi-dormant in cold storage—do exactly the same thing. It had not occurred to anybody, in fact, until very recently, when some specialists in the bureau of plant industry, worked it out. It is not always possible to leave the windows open in the sleeping room of the apples, but the specialists have found a way of getting around the difficulty in experimental quantities of the absorption in certain fats and oils of the poison that is breathed out by the apples.

The disease which may be the cause in apples is known as apple scald and manifests itself by turning the skin of the apple brown. While the scientists have discovered that the disease is due to a gas or gas breathed out by the apples, they have not been able to identify the gas or gases. But they have discovered that, if the apples are placed in wrappers impregnated with certain fats and oils, the poison is absorbed and the disease either prevented or reduced to a negligible quantity. A barrel experiment in which only part of the fruit was wrapped, the scald was greatly reduced on apples adjacent to the wrapped ones. Ordinary commercial apple wrappers cause little decrease in scald and paraffin wrappers were but little better.

Several other points of importance were determined as a result of the experiments. Mature fruit scalds less than immature, but fruit just changing from green to yellow has scalded worse than either green or yellow fruit. Well-colored red fruit surfaces have been practically immune. Heavy irrigation of apple trees increases the susceptibility to scald in the apple produced. Apples in ventilated barrels developed less than a third as

much scald as those in commercial barrels if both were held in a storage room that received occasional ventilation. If the storage room was not ventilated, or if it was only poorly ventilated, the ventilated barrels caused very little decrease in scald. Apples near the aisle or near a door scalded far less than those in the bottom of the stack. Boxed apples exposed to a continuous air current of 83 miles an hour were practically free from scald while similar apples that did not receive the constant fanning became badly scalded. Stirring the storage air was found to be more important than renewing it. Scald was greatly increased on fruit delayed in storage unless well ventilated during the delay.

Grading and Packing Fruit preparatory to Placing in Cold Storage.

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WAY TO PRUNE RASPBERRIES

Advisable to Perform Operation in Spring When Buds Start—No Detriment to Canes.

It is generally advised to prune raspberries in the spring, and not to fall, because of their liability to die back during winter. If pruned in the fall, the chances are that another pruning would be required in the spring and double labor involved. Even when spring comes it is often prudent to wait till the buds start so that no mistake can be made as to just how far the live wood extends. Says a writer in an exchange, There is no detriment to the canes in such a practice, and I have found it of value also in the case of the blackberry, especially in the case of such varieties as the Early Harvest and King, which are injured by severe winters. The position of the blossom buds cannot always be discerned until they begin to open and show white. I have never observed any injury as the result of such late pruning.