

The Cow Puncher

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CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

The outcome was that Mrs. Hardy insisted upon Irene embarking at once upon a finishing course. Afterward they traveled together for a year in Europe. Then home again, Irene pursued her art, and her mother surrounded her with the social attractions which Doctor Hardy's comfortable income and professional standing made possible. Her purpose was obvious and but thinly disguised. She hoped that her daughter would outlive her youthful infatuation and would at length, in a more suitable match, give her heart to one of the numerous eligibles of her circle.

To promote this end Mrs. Hardy spared no pains. Young Carlton, son of a banker and one of the leading men of his set, seemed a particularly appropriate match. Mrs. Hardy opened her home to him, and Carlton, whatever his motives, was not slow to grasp the situation. For years Irene had not spoken of Dave Elden, and the mother had grown to hope that the old attachment had died down and would presently be quite forgotten in a new and more becoming passion. The fact is that Irene at that time would have been quite incapable of stating her relation toward Elden and its influence upon her attitude to life. She was by no means sure that she loved that sunburnt boy of romantic memory; she was by no means sure that she should ever marry him, let his development in life be what it would; but she felt that her heart was locked, at least for the present, to all other suitors. She had given her promise, and that settled the matter.

Notwithstanding her indifference the girl found herself encouraging Carlton's advances, or at least not meeting them with the rebuffs which had been her habit toward all other suitors, and Mrs. Hardy's hopes grew as the attachment apparently developed. But they were soon to be shattered.

Irene had gone with Carlton to the theater; afterward to supper. It was long past midnight when she reached home. She knocked at her mother's door and immediately entered. Her hair was disheveled and her cheeks were flushed, and she walked unsteadily across the room.

"What's the matter, Irene? What's the matter, child? Are you sick?" cried her mother, springing from her bed.

"No, I'm not sick," said the girl brutally. "I'm drunk!"

"Oh, don't say that," said her mother soothingly. "Proper people do not become drunk. You may have had too much champagne and tomorrow you will have a headache."

"Mother! I have had too much champagne, but not as much as that precious Carlton of yours had planned for. I just wanted to see how despicable he was, and I floated downstream with him as far as I dared. But just as the current got too swift I struck for shore. Oh, we made a scene, all right, but nobody knew me there, so the family name is safe and you can rest in peace. I called a taxi, and when he tried to follow me in I slapped him and kicked him. Kicked him, mother. Dreadfully undignified, wasn't it? . . . And that's what you want me to marry, in place of a man!"

Mrs. Hardy was chattering with mortification and excitement. Her plans had miscarried. Irene had misbehaved. Irene was a difficult, headstrong child. It was useless to argue with her in her present mood. It was useless to argue with her in any mood. No doubt Carlton had been impetuous. Nevertheless he stood high in his set and his father was something of a power in the financial world. As the wife of such a man Irene might have a career before her—a career from which at least some of the glory would reflect upon the silvering head of the mother of Mrs. Carlton.

"Go to your room," she said at length. "You are in no condition to talk tonight. I must say it is a shame that you can't go out for an evening without drinking too much and making a scene. . . . What will Mr. Carlton think of you?"

"If he remembers all I told him about himself he'll have enough to think of," the girl blazed back. "You know—what I have told you—and still Mister Carlton stands as high in your sight as ever. I am the one to blame. Very well. I've tried your choice and I've tried my own. Now I am in a position to judge. There will be nothing to talk about in the morning. Mention Carlton's name to me again and I will give the whole incident to the papers . . . with photographs . . . and names. Fancy the feature heading, 'Society Girl, Intoxicated, Kicks Escort Out of Taxi.' Good night."

But other matters were to demand the attention of mother and daughter in the morning. While the scene was occurring in Mrs. Hardy's bedroom her husband, clad in white, toiled in the operating room to save the life of a fellow being. There was a slip of an instrument, but the surgeon toiled on; he could not at that juncture

pause; the life of the patient was at stake. When the operation was finished he found his injury deeper than he supposed, and Irene was summoned from her heavy sleep that morning to attend his bedside. He talked to her as a philosopher; said his life's work was done and he was just as glad to go in the harness; and there was his life insurance—a third would be for her. And when Mrs. Hardy was not at his side he found opportunity to whisper, "And if you really love that boy out West marry him."

The sudden bereavement wrought a reconciliation between Mrs. Hardy and her daughter. Mrs. Hardy took her loss very much to heart. While Irene grieved for her father Mrs. Hardy grieved for herself. It was awful to be left alone like this. And when the lawyers found that, instead of a hundred thousand dollars, the estate would yield a bare third of that sum, she spoke openly of her husband's improvidence. He had enjoyed a handsome income, on which his family had lived in luxury. That it was unequal to the strain of providing for them in that fashion and at the same time accumulating a reserve for such an eventuality as had occurred was a matter which his widow could scarcely overlook.

Her health had suffered a severe shock, for beneath her ostentation she felt as deep a regard for her late husband as was possible in one who measured everything in life by various social formulae. She consulted a specialist who had enjoyed a close professional acquaintanceship with Doctor Hardy. The specialist gave her a careful, meditative and solemn examination.

"Your condition is serious," he told her, "but not alarming. You must have a drier climate and, preferably, a higher altitude. I am convinced that the



"No, I'm Not Sick," said the Girl Brutally. "I'm Drunk."

conditions your health demands are to be found in —" He named the former cow town from which Irene's fateful automobile journey had had its start, and the young woman, who was present with her mother, felt herself go suddenly pale with the thought of a great prospect.

"Oh, I could never live there!" Mrs. Hardy protested. "It is so crude. Cow-punchers, you know, and all that sort of thing."

The specialist smiled. "You will probably not find it so crude, although I dare say some of its customs may jar on you," he remarked, dryly. "And it is not a case of not being able to live there. It is a case of not being able to live here. If you take my advice you should die of old age, as far, at least, as your present ailment is concerned. If you don't—and he dropped his voice to just the correct note of gravity, which pleased Mrs. Hardy very much—"if you don't, I can't promise you a year."

Confronted with such an alternative, the good lady had no option. She accepted the situation with the resignation which she deemed to be correct under such circumstances, but the boundless prairies were to her so much desolation and ugliness. Irene gathered that her mother did not approve of prairies. They were something new to her life, and it was greatly to be suspected that they were improper.

CHAPTER IX.

Very slowly it dawned upon Mrs. Hardy that this respectable, thriving city, with its well-dressed, properly mannered people, its public spirit, its aggressiveness, its churches and theaters and schools, its law and order, and its afternoon teas, after all, was the real West; sincere, earnest; crude, perhaps; bare, certainly; the scar of its recent battle with the wilderness still fresh upon its person; lacking the finish that only time can give to a landscape or a civilization; but lacking also the moldiness, the mustiness, the insufferable artificiality of older communities. Even Mrs. Hardy, steeped for sixty years in a life of precedent and rule and caste, began to catch the enthusiasm of a new land where precedent and rule and caste are something of a handicap.

"We must buy a home," she said to

Irene. "We cannot afford to continue living at a hotel, and we must have our own home. You must look up a responsible dealer whose advice we can trust in a matter of this kind."

And was it remarkable that Irene Hardy should think at once of the firm of Conward & Elden? It was not. She had, indeed, been thinking of a member of that firm ever since the decision to move to the West. The fact is Irene had not been at all sure that she wanted to marry Dave Elden; she wanted very much to meet him again; she was curious to know how the years had fared with him, and her curiosity was not unmingled with a finer sentiment; but she was not at all sure that she should marry him.

"What, Dave Elden, the millionaire?" Bert Morrison had said. "Everybody knows him." And then the newspaper woman had gone on to tell what a figure Dave was in the business life of the city. "One of our biggest young men," Bert Morrison had said. "Reserved, a little; likes his own company best; but absolutely white."

That gave a new turn to the situation. Irene had always wanted Dave to be a success; suddenly she doubted whether she had wanted him to be so big a success. She had doubted whether she should wish to marry Dave; she had never allowed herself to doubt that Dave would wish to marry her. Secretly, she had expected to rather dazzle him with her ten years' development—with the culture and knowledge which study and travel and life had added to the charm of her young girlhood; and suddenly she realized that her luster would shine but dimly in the greater glory of his own. . . .

It was easy to locate the office of Conward & Elden; it stood on a principal corner of a principal street. Thence she led her mother, and found herself treading on the marble floors of the richly appointed waiting room in a secret excitement which she could with difficulty conceal. She was, indeed, very uncertain about the next development. . . . Her mother had to be reckoned with.

A young man asked courteously what could be done for them.

"We want to see the head of the firm," said Mrs. Hardy. "We want to buy a house."

They were shown into Conward's office. Conward gave them the welcome of a man who expects to make money out of his visitors. He placed a very comfortable chair for Mrs. Hardy; he adjusted the blinds to a nicety; he discarded his cigarette and beamed upon them with as great a show of cordiality as his somewhat beefy appearance would permit. Mrs. Hardy outlined her life history with considerable detail and ended with the confession that the West was not as bad as she had feared and, anyway, it was a case of living here or dying elsewhere, so she would have to make the best of it. And here they were. And might they see a house?

Conward appeared to be reflecting. As a matter of fact, he saw in this experienced buyer an opportunity to reduce his holdings in anticipation of the impending crash. His diffidence was that he had no key to the financial resources of his visitors. The only thing was to throw out a fee.

"You are wanting a nice home take it, that can be bought at a favorable price for cash. You would consider an investment of, say—"

He paused, and Mrs. Hardy supplied the information for which he was waiting. "About twenty-five thousand dollars," she said.

"We can hardly invest that much," Irene interrupted, in a whisper. "We must have something to live on."

"People here live on the profits of their investments, do they not, Mr. Conward?" Mrs. Hardy inquired.

"Oh, certainly," Conward agreed, and he plunged into a mass of incidents to show how profitable investments had been to other clients of the firm. Then his mood of deliberation gave way to one of briskness; he summoned a car, and in a few minutes his clients were looking over the property which he had recommended. Mrs. Hardy was an amateurish buyer, her tendency being alternately to excess of caution on one side and recklessness on the other. Conward's manner pleased her; the house he showed pleased her, and she was eager to have it over with. But he was too shrewd to appear to encourage a hasty decision. He did not seize upon Mrs. Hardy's remark that the house seemed perfectly satisfactory; on the contrary, he insisted on showing other houses, which he quoted at such impossible figures that presently the old lady was in a feverish haste to make a deposit lest some other buyer should forestall her.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Observation of Oil Belt Philosopher.
A scientist has just discovered that fish are intelligent. We had observed also that they don't bite on everything that comes along.—Baxter Citizen.

A London choir of one thousand voices has been organized under the auspices of the League of Arts to sing at public ceremonies.

LILA LEE



Miss Lila Lee is a most able dispenser of cheer. Only a few short years ago she was a little tot playing "Ring Around a Rosie," in the streets of Union Hill, N. J. She was induced to enter vaudeville, and a little later was entered as a candidate for becoming a "movie" star. "Keep smiling" is the motto of this little film favorite.

"Off Agin, On Agin"

Strickland W. Gillilan
(Copyright.)

TWO BRANDS OF PROPHET.

Two kinds of prophet I have met
Upon my journey here below—
Two kinds! And I am free to bet
Both kinds you also chance to know.

One kind keeps still before events,
And later says, "I told you so."
I must admit I am too dense
To see why he keeps lying so.

The other kind blurt out his say,
And when the day is past and gone
He hides, if things don't go his way,
And keeps as still as Coal Oil John.

Two kinds of prophet—each no good—
Both you and I have always known;
Two kinds of prophet; and we should
Be scared if neither "pulled a bone."

'NOTHIN'!

Recently one of the greatest painters of poultry was operated on at a St. Louis hospital. Poultry painting, perhaps, does not require great ability. We know a butcher who never had an chicken in his life who can draw a chicken in a minute, so skillfully that the most careful cook has only to wash it a little and put it in to roast.

Couldn't Be Done So Soon.
A proverbially indigent though honest citizen in a western town lately applied to the president of the local Rotary Club of

An Alfy Dog.

Evidently there are dogs in this country that are opposed to hypochondria, but not hydrophoboided Americans. Lately at Ames, Ia., a German scientific laborer, employed in the state agricultural school work, was bitten in the face by a rabid or unrabid dog and had to be taken to the Paris-sourizing studio in Des Moines. Bitten by an American dog and given French treatment, all inside of 24 hours, is going some for a German!

CROSBY'S KIDS

JUVENILE JOYS



THE FIRST TIME YOU WHISTLED THROUGH YOUR TEETH

SCHOOL DAYS



The loose tooth
(Copyright.)

Last Night's Dreams

—What They Mean
DID YOU DREAM OF ACCIDENTS?

THE high-brows, the scientific investigators of dream phenomena, have invented a fearful and wonderful word for the art of taking omens from dreams. The call it *oneironancy*—five syllables, accent on the second. Freud, in answer to the question, "Does the dream have any value for a knowledge of the future?" would substitute "for a knowledge of the past," for "the dream originates in the past in every sense. He adds in his characteristically involved and transcendental manner "to be sure the ancient belief that the dream reveals the future is not entirely devoid of truth. By representing to us a wish as fulfilled the dream certainly leads us into the future, but this future taken by the dreams as present, has been formed into the likeness of the past by the indestructible wish." Read that over several times and perhaps you will see what the learned professor is driving at.

The ancients, especially the Persians, Egyptians and Greeks who erected the foretelling of events by dreams into an art, divided dreams into different kinds, only one kind of which would literally come true and would not interpret the dreams of people who had been drinking. And some modern soothsayers refuse to regard as prophetic dreams caused by indigestion or alcohol. Bishop Synodus, who lived in the fourth century and will be remembered by all readers of Charles Kingsley's *Hypatia*, wrote a treatise on dreams in which he states that as no two people are alike the same dream does not have the same significance for everybody and we must find out the meaning of our dreams for ourselves. All of which is well to remember when we consider the dream of the modern mystics in regard to such dreams as say: those of accidents for instance. Some mystics say that to dream of seeing or being in an accident merely means that you are to have an unexpected meeting with some acquaintance; others that it is a warning not to travel far afield. According to still others to see a friend in a dream means short-lived worries and to dream of being in one, a slow but sure success in life.

Baked Squash, Coconut Balls
Mix and pack the following half of a cleaned, unpared squash. Three cupsful of grated fresh crumbs, one-half of a ground six green peppers shredded, small onions chopped, one pint very chopped, one-fourth of a cupful each of dry mint and fresh, one-half tablespoonful—spoonful of salt, three eggs and milk. When the mixture is into the squash pour over a spoonful of melted butter and until the squash is tender, bake occasionally with butter and

Potatoes on the Half-Shell
Take six good-sized, smooth, toes, bake about an hour. Wash cut in two, lengthwise, and spoon carefully scoop out the into a bowl. Mash fine, add butter and half a cupful of hot milk and pepper to taste. Beat very add the well-beaten whites of eggs, fold in and fill the shells the potato. Brush with the oil and bake 15 minutes in a hot

Orange Pie
Take one cupful of sugar, two spoonfuls of melted butter, and the yolks of two, one cup milk, one teaspoonful of soda, two spoonfuls of cream of tartar, juice of one orange, and three flour. Bake in layers and put with whipped cream, sweetened flavored with orange.

Eggs in Curry Sauce
Cook four eggs by dropping into boiling water, using tea and covering tightly; set the back of the stove where they hot but not boil, for 30 minutes move the shells and allow the a buttered baking dish. Melt a spoonful of butter in a saucepan, add one and one-half spoonfuls of flour, a little salt, pepper and a half tablespoonful curry powder. When smooth add a cupful of milk and cook until free from all taste of raw. Pour this sauce over the eggs with a layer of buttered bread. Brown in a hot oven and serve.

Nellie M...
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Gifts of Destiny
By GEORGE MATTHEW ADAMS

DESTINY plays a varied little game in this brief life span of yours. To you she hands Opportunities and Responsibilities that if used and assumed, breed other Responsibilities and Opportunities, certain to sweep you on and on—though you see not the value nor the purpose.