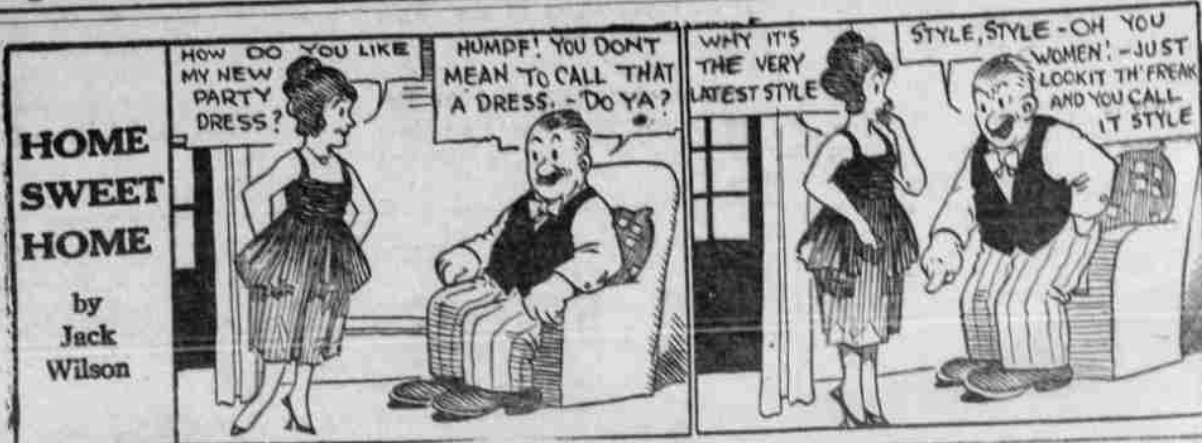




The Cow Puncher

(Continued from Last Week)

fore she could stop him he had walked out of the house.

She rushed to the gate, but already the roar of his motor was lost in the hum of the city's traffic.

CHAPTER XIII.

When Dave sprang into his car he gave the motor a full head and drove through the city streets in a fury of recklessness. His mind was numbed; he was incapable of asserting thoughts and placing them in proper relationship to one another. He was soon out of the city, roaring through the still autumn night with undiminished speed.

Over tortuous country roads, across sudden bridges, along slippery hill-sides, through black bluffs of scrub land—in some strange way he tried to drown the uproar in his soul in the frenzy of the steel that quivered beneath him. On and on into the night. Bright stars gleamed overhead; a soft breeze pressed against his face; it was such a night as he had driven, a year ago, with Bert Morrison. Was that only a year ago? And what had happened? Where had he been? Oh, to bring the boy—Charlie, the boy. When was that? Under the calm heaven his mind was already attempting to establish a sequence, to set its outraged home again in order.

Suddenly the car skidded on a slippery hillside, turned from the road, plowed through a clump of scrub, ricocheted against a dark obstruction, poised a moment on two wheels, turned around, and stopped. The shock brought Dave to his senses. He sat on the running board and stared for a long while into the darkness.

"No use being a d—d fool, anyway, Dave," he said to himself at length. "I got it—where I didn't expect it—but I guess that's the way with everyone." He tried to philosophize; to get a fresh grip on himself. "Where are we, anyway?" he continued. "This country looks familiar." He got up again and walked about, finding his way back to the road. He went along it a little way. Vague impressions suggested that he should know the spot, and yet he could not identify it. Then, with a sudden shock, it came to him. It was the hillside on which Doctor Hardy had come to grief; the hillside on which he had first seen her bright face, her wonderful eyes. . . . A poignancy of grief engulfed him, sweeping away his cheap philosophies. Here she stood, young and clean and entrancing, thrust before him in an instant out of the wonderful days of the past. And would she always follow him thus? With an unutterable sinking he knew that was so—that the world was not big enough to hide him from Irene Hardy. There was no way out.

He started his motor, and even in his despair felt a thrill of pride as the faithful gears engaged and the car climbed back to its place on the trail. Was all faithfulness, then, in things of steel and iron, and none in flesh and blood? He followed the trail. Why stop now? The long-forgotten ranch buildings lay across the stream and behind the tongue of spruce trees, unless some wandering foothill fire had destroyed them. He forded the stream without difficulty. That was where he had carried her out. . . . He felt his way slowly along the old fence. That was where she had set up bottles for his marksmanship. . . . He stopped where the straggling gate should be and walked carefully into the yard. That was where she had first called him Dave. . . . Then he found the doorstep and sat down to wait.

When the sun was well up he arose and walked about. His lips were parched; he found himself nibbling them with his teeth, so he went to the stream. He was thirsty, but he drank only a mouthful; the water was flat and insipid. . . . The old cabin was in better repair than he would have thought. He sprang the door open. It was musty and strung with cob webs. He did not go in but sat down and tried to think.

Later he walked up the canyon. He must have walked swiftly, for the sun was not yet at the meridian. . . . He found himself at the little nook in the rock where he and Irene had sat that afternoon when they had laid their hearts open to each other. Suddenly one remark stood up in his memory. "The day is coming," she had said, "when our country will want men who can shoot and ride." And he had said, "Well, when it does it can call on me." And today the country did want men who could shoot and ride, and he had flown into the foothills to nurse a broken heart. . . . Broken hearts can fight as well as whole ones. He could be of some use yet. At any rate there was a way out.

Some whim led him through the grove of spruce trees on his way back

to the ranch. Here, in an open space, he looked about, kicking in the dry grass. At length his toe disturbed a few bleached bones, and he stood and looked with unseeing eyes far across the shimmering valley.

"Brownie," he said at length. "Brownie." The whole scene came back upon him—the moonlight, and Irene's distress, and the little bleeding body. And he had said he didn't know anything about the justice of God; all he knew was the critter that couldn't run was the one that got caught. . . . And he had said that was life. . . . He had said it was only nature.

And then they had stood among the trees and beneath the white moon and pledged their faith. . . .

Again his head went up and the old light flashed in his eyes. "The first thing is to kill the wolf," he said aloud. "No other innocent shall fall to his fangs. Then—my country."

Darkness had again fallen before Dave found his car threading the streets of the city, still feverish with its newborn excitement of war. He returned his car to the garage; an attendant looked up curiously—it was evident from his glance that Dave had already been missed—but no words were exchanged. He stood for a moment in the street, collecting his thoughts and rehearsing his resolves.

He was amazed to find that, even in his bitterness, the city reached a thousand hands to him—hands of habit and association and customs of mind—all urging him back into the old groove; all saying: "The routine is the thing. Be a spoke in the wheel; go round with the rest of us."

"No," he reminded himself. "No, I can't do that. I have business on hand. First—to kill the wolf."

He remembered that he had given his revolver to Irene. And suddenly she sat with him again at the tea table. . . . Where was he? Yes, he had given his revolver to Irene. Well, there was another in his rooms.

In the hallway of the block in which he had his bachelor apartments Dave almost collided with a woman. He drew back, and the light fell on his face, but hers was in the shadow. And then he heard her voice.

"Oh, Dave, I'm so glad—Why, what has happened?" The last words ran into a little treble of pain as she noted his haggard face.

"You—Edith?" he managed to say. "Whatever—"

She came toward him and placed her hands on his. "I've been here hundred times—ever since morn'—ever since Bert Morrison called to say you had disappeared—that there was some mystery. There isn't, is there, Dave? You're all right, Dave, aren't you, Dave?"

"I guess I'm all right," he managed to answer, "but I got a job on—an important job on. I must get it done. There is no time—"

But her woman's intuition had gone far below his idle words. "There is something wrong, Dave," she said. "You never looked like this before. Tell me what it is. Tell me, Dave. Perhaps I—can help."

Dave was silent for a moment, watching her. Suddenly it occurred to him that Edith Duncan was beautiful.

If she had not quite the fine features of Irene she had a certain softness of expression, a certain mellowness, even tenderness, of lip and eye; a certain womanly delicacy—

"Edith," he said, "you're white. Why is it that the woman a man loves will fall him, and the woman he only likes—stays true?"

"Oh!" she cried, and he could not guess the depths from which her cry was wrung. . . . "I should not have asked you, Dave," she said. "I'm sorry."

They stood a moment, neither wishing to move away. "You said you had something that must be done at once," she reminded him at length.

"Yes," he answered. "I have to kill a man. Then I'm going to join up with the army."

Her hands were again upon him. "But you mustn't, Dave," she pleaded. "You can't fight for your country then. You will only increase its troubles in these troubled times. Don't think I'm advising for him, Dave, but for you, for the sake of us—for the sake of those—who care."

He took her hands in his and raised them to his shoulders and drew her face close to his. Then, speaking very slowly, and with each word by itself, "Do you really care?" he said.

"Oh, Dave!"

"Then come to my room and talk to me. Talk to me! Talk to me! For God's sake talk to me! I must talk to someone."

She followed him. Inside the room he had himself under control again. He told her the story, all he knew.

When he had finished she arose and walked to one of the windows and stood looking with unseeing eyes upon the street. For the second time in his life Dave Elden had laid his heart bare to her, and again after all these years he still talked as friend to

friend. That was it. She was under no delusion. Dave's eyes were as blind to her love as they had been that night when he had first told her of Irene Hardy. And she could not tell him. Most of all she could not tell him now. . . . She had waited all these years, and still she must wait.

Dave's eyes were upon her form, silhouetted against the window. It occurred to him that in form Edith was very much like Irene. He recalled that in those dead past days when they used to ride together Edith had reminded him of Irene.

When she stood silent so long he spoke again.

"I'm afraid I haven't played a very heroic part," he said, somewhat shamefacedly. "I should have buried my secret in my heart; buried it even from you; perhaps most of all from you. But—you can advise me, Edith. I will value whatever you say."

She trembled until she thought he must see her, and she feared to trust her voice, but she could delay a reply no longer.

"Dave," she said at length, "why should you take Concord's word in such a matter as this?"

"I didn't take Concord's word. That's why I didn't kill him at once. It wasn't his word, it was the insult that cut. But she tried to save him. She threw herself upon me. She would have taken the bullet herself rather than let it find him. That was what—that was what—"

"I know, Dave." She had to hold herself in check lest the tenderness that welled within her, and would shape words of endearing sympathy in her mind, should find utterance in speech. "I know, Dave."

"The next thing then, Dave, is to be sure in your own mind that you ever really loved Irene."

"Cause if you love her, you love her now."

"Edith," he said, "I can't explain it. I know I love her. I love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"I know you do," she said. "I know you love her. I know you love her now."

"Is that Christianity?" he ventured. "It is one side of Christianity. The other side is service. If you are willing to forgive and ready to move I don't think you need worry much over the details of your creed. Creeds, after all, are not expressed in words but in lives. When you know how a man lives you know what he believes—always."

"Suppose I forgive—what then?"

"Service. You are needed right now, Dave—forgive my frankness—your country needs you right now. You must dismiss this grievance from your mind, at least dismiss your resentment over it, and then place yourself at the disposal of your country."

"That is what I had been thinking of," he said. "At least that part about serving my country, although I don't think my motives were as high as you would make them. But the war can't last. It is unbelievable."

"I'm not so sure," she answered gravely. "Of course I know nothing about Germany. But I do know something about our own people. I know how selfish and individualistic and sordid and money-grabbing we have been; how aloof and incompetent and self-satisfied we have been; and I fear it will take a long war and sacrifices and tragedies altogether beyond our present imagination to make us unselfish and public-spirited and clean and generous. I am not worrying about the defeat of Germany. If our civilization is better than that of Germany we shall win, ultimately, and if our civilization is worse than that of Germany we shall be defeated ultimately—and we shall deserve to be defeated."

"But I rather think that neither of the alternatives will be the result. I rather think that the test of war will show that there are elements in German civilization which are better than ours, and elements in our civilization which are better than theirs, and that the good elements will survive and form the basis of a new civilization better than either."

"If that is so," Dave replied, "if this war is but the working of immutable law which proposes to put all the elements of civilization to the supreme test and retain only those which are justifiable by that test, why should I—or anyone else—fight? And," he added, as an afterthought, "what about that principle of forgiveness?"

"We must fight," she answered, "because it is the law that we must fight; because it is only by fighting that we can justify the principles for which we fight. If we hold our principles as being not worth fighting for the new civilization will show those principles in the discard. And that, too, covers the question of forgiveness. Forgiveness, in fact, does not enter into the consideration at all."

"We must fight, not because we hate Germany but because we love certain principles which Germany is endeavoring to overthrow. The impulse must be love, not hate."

She had turned and faced him while she spoke, and he felt himself strangely carried away by the earnestness of her argument. What a wonderful woman she was! And as he looked at her he again thought of Irene, and suddenly he felt himself engulfed in a great tenderness, and he knew that even yet—

"What am I to do?" he said. "What am I to do?"

In the darkness of her own shadow she set her teeth for that answer. It was to be the crowning act of self-renunciation and it strained every fiber of her resolution.

"You had better go overseas and enlist in England," she told him calmly, although her nails were biting her palms. "You will get quicker action that way. And when you come back you must see Irene, and you must—"

(Continued Next Week)

YOUR LIBERTY BOND

The United States government borrowed money from you to finance the war. You hold the government's promise to pay you back. This promise is called a Liberty Bond or Victory Note. On this bond is stated the conditions under which the government borrowed the money from you.

For instance: If you hold a Bond of the Third Liberty Loan, it states that on April 15th and October 15th of each year until maturity, you will receive interest on the amount you paid for the Bond. Other issues bear other rates of interest and other maturity dates, all of which are clearly stated on the Bond.

Now, if you keep your Bond until the date when the government pays you in full for it, you do not need to worry if, in the meantime, the price is low one day or high the next. You and Uncle Sam are living up to your agreement with each other, and neither will lose by it.

On the other hand, if you sell your Liberty Bond now, you will find that you can sell it to will not give you a dollar for every dollar you paid for it. The price has been brought down because so many people are offering to sell their Bonds. If the market is flooded with tomatoes, you can buy them cheap, but if everyone is clamoring for tomatoes and there are few to be had, the price goes up. The same is true of Liberty Bonds. Short sighted people are dumping them on the market and wise ones are buying more.

The best advice that can be given to the owner of a Liberty Bond is this: Hold the Bond you bought during the war; it is as safe and sound as the United States government itself.

Buy as many more at the present low rate as you can afford. If you hold them to maturity, you are bound to make the difference between

value. You will also receive interest on your investment. Hold on to your Liberty Bond and buy more.

La Grande Marquette Lodge, modern building, planned.

Klamath Falls—New country.

Order your winter supply from W. J. Clark. Phone 722 or leave order at the office.

Seventh Day Adventist Church, Independence, Sabbath School 1.30. Services at 2.30 p.m. Hall over Craven & Walker's stationery store across from bank. All are welcome.

Closing out a few tires at five prices at Independence.



THE REASON WHY Money is More Safe is NATIONAL BANKS

"OVER 21 BILLION RESOURCES"

(Each Under Supervision of U. S. Gov't)

Of all the places there are Deposit, Hide, and Invest Money—here is the "Why" we should prefer National Bank.

INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL BANK
This Bank is Under Supervision of United States Government.

YOU WILL FIND IN YOUR City - Meat - Market



LINE OF MEATS EQUAL TO ANY MARKET IN A LARGE CITY CONSISTING OF THE FINEST MEATS OBTAINABLE

THE CITY MEAT MARKET
Main street. Independence, O.

A Grocery That Never Disappoints Customers

GROCERIES Cheapest in Large Quantities

Not Best Because Biggest But Biggest Because Best

No Order Too Large To Fill No Order Too Small To Refuse

This Store Aims to Serve the Public Pleasantly and Well—Goods We Sell are Just as Represented and When Orders are Given We NEVER DUPLICATE. We Send You Just What You Order. Never Send the "Just as Good" Kind.

Calbreath & Jones