The COW PUNCHER

By Robert J.C.Stead

Author of "Kitchener, and other poems"

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

"FOOL! FOOL! FOOL!"

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 get well acquainted during her enforced stay. 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 lesson in city ways.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

—6—

Dave's duties were simple enough. He had to drive a wagon to a coalyard, where a very superior young man, with a collar, would express surprise that he had been so long gone, and tell him to back in under chute number so-and-so. It appeared to be always a matter of great distress to this young man that Dave did not know which chute to back under until he was told. Having backed into position a door was opened. There was a fiction that the coal in the bin should then run into the wagon box, but, as Dave at once discovered, this was merely a fiction. Aside from a few accommodating lumps near the door the coal had to be shoveled. Then Dave had to drive to an address that was given him, shovel the coal down a chute located in the most inaccessible position the premises afforded, and return to the coalyard, where the young man with the collar would facetiously inquire whether Mrs. Blank had invited him in to afternoon tea, or if he had been waiting for a change in the weather.

His work and supper were over by seven o'clock each evening, and now was the opportunity for him to begin the schooling for which he had left the ranch. But he developed a sudden disinclination to make the start; he was tired in the evening, and he found it much more to his liking to stroll downtown, smoke cigarettes on the street corners, or engage in an occasional game of pool. In this way the weeks went by, and when his month with Metford was up he had neglected to find another position, so he continued where he was. He was being gradually and unconsciously submerged in an inertia which, however much it might hate its present surroundings, had not the spirit to seek a more favorable environment.

So the fall and winter drifted along; Dave had made few acquaintances and no friends, if we except Conward, whom he frequently met in the poolrooms and for whom he had developed a sort of attachment.

One Saturday evening, as Dave was on his way to their accustomed resort, he fell in with Conward on the street.

"Hello, old man!" said Conward cheerily. "I was just looking for you. Got two tickets for the show tonight. Some swell dames in the chorus. Come along. There'll be doings."

There were two theaters in the town, one of which played to the better-class residents. In it anything of a risque nature had to be presented

"Eating's Poor Business When There's a Thirst to Be Quenched," Said One of the Girls.

with certain trimmings which allowed it to be classified as "art," but in the other house no such restrictions existed. It was to the latter that Conward led. Dave had been there before, in the cheap upper gallery, but Conward's tickets admitted to the best seats in the house.

It was an entirely new experience. From the upper gallery the actors and actresses always seemed more or less impersonal and abstract, but here they were living, palpitating human beings, almost within hand-reach, certainly within eye-reach. Dave found himself regarding the young woman immediately before him; all in white she was, with some scintillating material that sparkled in the glare of the spotlight; then suddenly she was in orange, and pink, and purple, and mauve, and back again in white. And although she performed the various steps with smiling abandon there was in her dress and manner a modesty which fascinated the boy with a subtlety which a more reckless appearance would have at once defeated.

And then Dave looked in her face. It was a pretty face, notwithstanding its grease paint, and it smiled right into his eyes. His heart thumped between his shoulders as though it would drive all the air from his lungs. She smiled at him—for him! Now they were away again; there were gyrations about the stage.

Then there was a sudden breakaway in the dance, and the girl disappeared behind a forest. Dave supposed she had gone to rest; dancing like that must be hard on the wind. He found little to interest him now in what was going on on the stage. It seemed rather foolish. He wished the girl behind the forest would come down and rest there. Then she could see the show herself. Then she could see—

But there was a whir from the forest, and the girl reappeared, this time all in red, right before him. And then she looked down and smiled again at him. And he smiled back. And then he looked at Conward and saw him smiling too. And then he felt a very distressing uncertainty, which brought the color slowly to his face. He resolved to say nothing, but watch. And his observations convinced him that the smiles had been for Conward, not for him. And then he lost interest in the play.

They hustled into their overcoats to the playing of the national anthem.

"Hurry!" said Conward. "Let's get out quick! Ain't she some dame? There—through the side exit—the stage door is that way. She promised to have her chum with her. They'll be waiting if we don't hurry."

Conward steered him to the stage entrance, where a little group was already congregated. In a moment the girl appeared, handsomely dressed in furs. With her was another girl, also from the chorus, but Dave could not recall her part. He was suddenly aware of being introduced.

"This is my friend Belton," Conward was saying.

Dave was about to correct him when Conward managed to whisper: "Whist! Your stage name. Mine's Edward. Don't forget."

Conward took the first girl by the arm, and Dave found himself following rapidly with the other. They cut through certain side streets, up a stairway, and into a dark hall. A door opened. Conward pressed a button, and they found themselves in a small but comfortably furnished room—evidently bachelor apartments.

The girls threw off their wraps and sauntered about the place, while Conward started a gas grate and put some water to boil.

"Sorry I've nothing for you to eat," he said, "but I've some good medicine for the thirst."

"Eating's poor business when there's a thirst to be quenched," said one of the girls with a yawn. "And, believe me, I've a long one."

The glasses were filled and raised. "Ho!" said Conward.

"Here's looking!" said one of the girls.

Dave hesitated, but the other girl clinked her glass against his. "Here's looking at you," she said, and she appeared to lay special emphasis on the last two words. Certainly her eyes were on Dave's as she raised her glass to her lips. And under the spell of those eyes he raised his glass and drained it.

Other glasses were filled and drained. The three were chattering away, but Dave was but vaguely conscious of their talk and could weave no connected meaning into it. His head was buzzing with a pleasant, dreamy sensation. A very grateful warmth surrounded him, and with it came a disposition to go to sleep. He probably would have gone to sleep had his eye not fallen on a picture on the wall. It was a picture of a girl pointing her finger at him. . . . No girl could point her finger at him. He arose and made a lunge across the room. He missed her, and with difficulty retraced his steps to the table to make a fresh start.

"She's makin' fun of me," he said, "an' I don't stand for that. Nobody can do that with me. Nobody—see? I don't 'low it."

"Oh, you don't?" laughed one of the girls, running into a corner and pointing her finger at him. "You don't?"

He turned his attention to her, steadying himself very carefully before he attempted an advance. Then, with wide-stretched arms, he bore down cautiously upon her. When he had her almost within reach she darted along the edge of the room. He attempted a sudden change in direction, which ended disastrously, and he found himself very much sprawled out upon the floor. He was aware of laughter, but what cared he? He was disposed to sleep. What better place to sleep than this? What better time to sleep than this? In a moment he was lost to all consciousness. . . .

It was later in the night when he felt himself being dragged into a sitting posture. "Where am I?" he said, blinking at the light. He rose uncertainly to his feet and stared about the room in returning consciousness. "Where's the girls?" he asked.

"Gone," said Conward sulkily. "Couldn't expect 'em to stick around all night to say goodby, could you, and you sleeping off your drunk?"

Dave raised his hand to his head. A sense of disgrace was already upon him. Then he suddenly turned in anger on Conward. "You put this up on me," he cried. "You made a fool of me. I've a mind to bash your skull in for you."

"Don't be silly," Conward retorted. "I didn't enjoy it any more than you did—introducing you as my friend, and then have you go out like that. Why didn't you tip me? I didn't know it would put you to sleep."

"Neither did I," said Dave.

"Well, the next thing is to get you home. Can you walk?"

"Sure."

Dave started for the door, but his course suddenly veered and he found himself leaning over a chair. Conward helped him into his overcoat, and half led, half shoved him to his boarding house.

CHAPTER IV.

Elden awoke Sunday morning with a prodigious thirst, which he slaked at the water pitcher. It was the practice of Metford's gang to select one of their number to care for all the horses on Sundays while the others enjoyed the luxury of their one day of leisure. In consequence of this custom the room was still full of snoring sleepers and the air was very close and foul.

Dave sat down by the little table that fronted the open window and rested his head on his hands. He was recalling, with considerable effort, the events of the previous night; piecing

"You Made a Fool of Me. I've a Mind to Bash Your Skull in for You."

them together in impossible ways; reassorting them until they offered some sequence. The anger he had felt toward Conward had subsided, but the sting of shame rankled in his heart.

"Fool!" he said to himself. And because he could think of no more specific expression to suit his feelings, and because expression of any kind brought a sort of relief, he kept on repeating the word, "Fool! fool! fool!" And as his self-condemnation gradually won him back to a sense of perspective he became aware of the danger of his position. He had left his ranch home to better himself, to learn things, to rise to be somebody. He had worked harder than ever before, at more disagreeable employment; he had lived in conditions that were almost nauseating—and what had he learned? That you can't beat a card man at his own game, price sixty dollars, and that the gallery seats are cheaper and sometimes safer than the orchestra.

Then all of a sudden he thought of Reenie. He had not thought of her much of late; he had been so busy in the days and so tired at nights that he had not thought of her much. Now she burst upon him again with all that beauty and charm which had so magnetized him in those glad, golden days, and the frank cleanness of her girlhood made him disgusted and ashamed. It was to fit himself for her that he had come to town, and what sort of mess was he making of it? He was going down instead of up. He had squandered his little money, and now he was squandering his life. He had been drunk. . . .

Dave's nature was one in which emotions were accelerated with their own intensity. And the sudden manner in which Reenie had now invaded his consciousness intensified the blackness in which he was submerged, as lightning darkens the storm. . . . He saw her on that last night, with the moonlight wooing her white face, until his own body had eclipsed it in a warmer passion, and he heard her words, "I know you are true and clean." . . .

True and clean. "Yes, thank God, I am still that!" he cried, springing suddenly to his feet and commencing to dress. "I've been spattered, but nothing that won't wash off. Perhaps"—and he stopped as the great thought struck him—"perhaps it was the luckiest thing in the world that the booze did put me out last night. . . . It'll wash off."

Dave turns over a new leaf.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Probably.

The Sergeant—What did you do before they assigned you here?

The New and Dark-haired Stenographer—I was a private secretary.

The Sergeant—Well, work hard and you'll probably get your stripes.—The Come-Back.

LITTLE COATS DEFY MIDWINTER

Against the coming of midwinter, a new lot of coats, for lucky little girls, have come to light in the shops. If they ever get close enough to Jack Frost to speak to him their wearers will be sure to laugh in his face for it will take his bitterest mood to prove him an enemy to their comfort. These coats are most often of thick, soft woolly cloths made double-breasted and having the coziest of collars. Some of them look as if Mary's faithful lamb had been skinned and its pelt converted into a coat without going through the hands of the spinners and weavers. Lovely and cozy describes them and they are, of course, the product of the looms which do miracles with wools. The little coats of thick cloths are plain with inset pockets and sleeves that reach to the knuckles, so that hands thrust into pockets are entirely lost sight of. They are made with turnover collars and narrow belts of the material and they are long enough to reach below the knees.

There are some pretty coats of velveteen lined with silk. These are sometimes made with blouse and skirt and sometimes straight. Cuffs and very wide muffler collars of fur fabric with deep set-in pockets show them equal to battling with the cold, even though they are not as sturdy looking as the woolly coats. Besides these there are many plush coats made like the woolly ones, usually in dark colors with plush collars that imitate beaver and buttons covered with beaver plush. They are as warm as the woolly coats and as dressy as the velvet ones. Finally, there are fur coats for little folks. These days one cannot even whisper "furs" without saying "money" in a loud tone of voice, so only little rich girls will find themselves wearing coats that are made of pelts that once defended small friends of theirs against the cold. Rabbits, muskrats and squirrels have been sacrificed to make warm coats for the small girls, white bunnies for the tiniest ones and just plain rabbits for girls as big as the little miss pictured. The shawl collar looks as if it were sealskin but it is not. Mollie Cottontail furnished the fur and the furrier dyed it. It is not prettier or more comfortable than the other coats, but it requires much more work to make it—and thereby hangs the tale of its long price. Such a coat costs a little more than a hundred dollars.

SOME OF THE SMALLER HATS

Just now millinery shops and their patrons are concerning themselves with hats for midwinter. Turbans and off-the-face hats, small and medium in size, make up a big percentage of the displays, although they are not alone in their glory. There are plenty of large, picturesque models for those who wear them well. But the smaller hats are prominent in every class of millinery; chic tailored hats for the street, semi-dress hats and brilliant models for afternoon wear—all prove successful in the smaller shapes.

The Napoleon hat, full of dash and style, seems to be the inspiration of many models. One interpretation of it appears at the top of the group of small and medium hats shown here. This is a brilliant hat of black paon velvet adorned with long stitches of chenille and an occasional velvet blossom set flat against the upturned brim. This is all that can be told of it in the way of description but the picture shows its style and youthfulness—the intangible things that make it fit company for a handsome afternoon frock or at home with a tailored coat.

The small velvet turban at the left made of tucked velvet, will appeal to the matron who insists upon smart millinery with lines and shape suited to her face. A long, sweeping wing at the front consents to rest where it is, in the company of two handsome ornamental pins, with large heads, that are thrust through it. It is a shape that will look well in any of the season's quieter tones of color and will make a fine suit hat. Another interesting hat for a matron is shown at the right of the group. It is of duvetyn with slashed brim. The crown is concealed by short, uncurled ostrich feathers.

The place of honor at the center of the group belongs to a hat that goes a step beyond mere prettiness and looks in another direction for its novel charm. It is one of those shaggy affairs that call to mind the headwear of Robinson Crusoe. Paris has made goats' hair—called by another name—a fashionable adornment for millinery and New York has given monkey fur much attention. These with glycerined and burnt ostrich, burnt goose and other feathers have been used for ornaments like the wreath on the black velvet beret at the center of the picture. A large ivory pin lends its aristocratic air to the ensemble, making a brilliant black and white combination equal to any occasion.

Julia Bottomley

Coats for Day Wear.

Many new coats intended for day wear are on straight tailored lines rather mannish in effect, while wraps for special occasion wear and for evening use are loose and in draped effect.

Refused Insurance

Mr. Dunning Left Service in Bad Shape, But Doan's Soon Corrected His Trouble.

Geo. Dunning, ex-Chief Boatswain Mate of the U. S. Navy, 470 Medford St., Somerville, Mass., says: "Every bit of trouble I suffered from my kidneys was a result of exposure at sea. I was retired practically an invalid. My kidneys became more irregular all the time and some nights I was forced to get up every half hour. The kidney secretions burned like fire and were filled with brick-dust-like sediment. My joints swelled and were inflamed. I couldn't bend over to lace my shoes and had to be helped up and down. Right after my retirement from service I tried to get insured, but was turned down because of kidney trouble. I began taking *Doan's Kidney Pills* and used sixteen boxes. By that time every sign of kidney trouble left me and my back was like iron; not an ache or pain left. I tried for insurance again and was declared a good risk. I give *Doan's Kidney Pills* credit for putting me in perfect health."

Mr. Dunning

Subscribed and sworn to before me.

GEORGE L. DOHERTY,
Notary Public.

Get Doan's at Any Store, 60c a Box

DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS

FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

BELCHING
Caused by
Acid-Stomach

Let EATONIC, the wonderful modern stomach remedy, give you quick relief from disgusting belching, food-repeating, indigestion, bloated, gassy stomach, dyspepsia, heartburn and other stomach miseries. They are all caused by Acid-Stomach from which about nine people out of ten suffer in one way or another. One writes as follows: "Before I used EATONIC, I could not eat a bite without belching it right up, sour and bitter. I have not had a bit of trouble since the first tablet."

Millions are victims of Acid-Stomach without knowing it. They are weak and ailing, have poor digestion, bodies improperly nourished although they may eat heartily. Grave disorders are likely to follow if an acid-stomach is neglected. Cirrhosis of the liver, intestinal congestion, gastritis, catarrh of the stomach—these are only a few of the many ailments often caused by Acid-Stomach.

A sufferer from Catarrh of the Stomach of 1 years' standing writes: "I had catarrh of the stomach for 11 long years and I never found anything to do me any good—just temporary relief—until I used EATONIC. It is a wonderful remedy and I do not want to be without it."

If you are not feeling quite right—lack energy and enthusiasm and don't know just where to locate the trouble—try EATONIC and see how much better you will feel in every way.

At all drug stores—a big box for 50c and your money back if you are not satisfied.

EATONIC
(FOR YOUR ACID-STOMACH)

E-Z Now-a-days, housekeepers who are particular, keep the living room and kitchen stoves well polished without hard, dirty work by using

E-Z Stove Polish
Ready Mixt — Ready to Shine

If your dealer don't sell E-Z, try others and send his name to Martin & Martin, Mfrs. Chicago.

FRECKLES POSITIVELY REMOVED by Dr. Berry's Freckle Ointment—Your druggist or by mail, 65c. Free book. Dr. C. H. Berry Co., 2975 Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

A Close Observer.

A little girl of Bellefield was caught in a gross exaggeration the other day, whereupon her mamma said in properly severe tones:

"My dear, don't you remember what happened to Ananias and Sapphira, whom I told you of the other day?"

"Yes'm, but de dear Lord don't make people dead now for tellin' stories," replied the small observer of events.—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

Little Wind in Siberia.

While the average temperature in Western Siberia is extremely low it is withstood by human beings comparatively easily because of the lack of wind.

HER LIFE WAS SAVED!

Kansas City, Kans.:—"About twenty-three years ago Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and Golden Medical Discovery saved my life. I became ill; had a severe cough and bronchitis. At times I would get so badly choked up that I would have to sit up in bed to get my breath and in a short time I began to suffer with dropsy. I doctored but did not improve, in fact, I got so bad I was bedfast and had to have a nurse. The doctor told me the only thing that would help me was a change of climate. He advised me to go to a southern climate. I knew of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and decided to try it. I had my nurse get me two bottles. The first night I had her give me just a few drops every few minutes and by twelve o'clock I was asleep, a thing I had not done for about three weeks. The next day they gave me this medicine every half hour and after that as directed. I kept up its use until I was a well woman. It not only cured me but I was in better health than I had ever been and since that time I have always taken 'Favorite Prescription' whenever I was badly run-down or in need of a tonic and it has never failed to help me. I am glad to recommend Dr. Pierce's medicines."—MRS. SARAH COLEMAN, 1420 Wood Ave.

Run-down—Weak—Nervous

Omaha, Nebr.:—"I was at one time greatly benefited by taking Dr. Pierce's medicines. I became all run-down in health, was weak and nervous and was greatly in need of some good tonic to build me up and give me strength. I took the 'Favorite Prescription' and the 'Golden Medical Discovery' and they proved to be just what I needed for they built me up and restored me to good health. For this I am very thankful, indeed."—MRS. JENNIE RICHARDSON, 537 S. 25th Ave.