

THE COW PUNCHER

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Illustrations by IRWIN MYERS

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The first flush of dawn was mellowing the eastern sky when the girl was awakened from uneasy sleep by sounds in the yard in front of the ranch-house.

The stars were still shining brightly through the cold air. In the faint light she could distinguish a team and wagon and men unhitching. She approached and, in a voice that sounded strangely distant in the vastness of the calm night, called:

"Is that you, Dave?"

And in a moment she wondered how she had dared call him Dave. But she soon had other cause for wonder, for the boy replied from near beside her in that tone of friendly confidence which springs so spontaneously in the darkness:

"Yes, Reenie, and the doctor, too. We'll have Mr. Hardy fixed up in no time. How did he stand the night?"

How dared he call her Reenie? A flush of resentment rose in her breast, only to be submerged in the sudden remembrance that she had first called him Dave. That surely gave him the right to address her as he had done. Then she remembered she was in the ranch country, in the foothills, where the conventions—the conventions she hated—had not yet become rooted, and where the souls of men and women stood bare in the clear light of frank acceptance of the fact. It would be idle—dangerous—to trifle with this boy by any attempt at concealment or deception.

She could see his form now as he led the horses toward the corral. How straight he was, and how bravely his footsteps fell on the hard earth!

"He's a wonderful boy," said the doctor, of whose presence she had been unconscious. "Cat's eyes. Full gallop through the dark; side-hills, mountain streams, up and down; breakneck. Well, here we are." The doctor breathed deeply, as though this last fact was one to occasion some wonderment. "Your brother tells me you have an injured man here. Accident. Stranger, I believe? Well, shall we go in?"

Brother! But why should she explain? Dave hadn't bothered. Why hadn't he? He had told about the stranger. Why had he not told about both strangers? Why had he ignored her altogether? This time came another flush, born of that keen womanly intuition which understands.

With a commonplace she led the doctor into the house and to the bedside of her father. When the operation was completed the girl turned her attention to the kitchen, where she found Dave, sweating in vicarious suffering. He had helped to draw the limb into place and it had been his first close contact with human pain. It was different from branding calves and he had slipped out of the room as soon as possible. The morning sun was now pouring through the window and the distraught look on the boy's face touched her even more than the frankness of the words spoken in the darkness. She suddenly remembered that he had been up all night—for her. She would not deceive herself with the thought that it was for her father's sake Dave had galloped to town, found a doctor, secured a fresh team and driven back along the little-used foothill trails. No doubt Dave would have done it all for her father, had her father been there alone, but as things were she had a deep conviction that he had done it for her. And it was with a greater effort than seemed reasonable that she laid her fingers on his arm and said:

"Thank you, Dave."

"What for?" he asked, and she could not doubt the genuineness of his question.

"Why, for bringing the doctor, and all that. I am sure I can't—father won't be able to—"

"Oh, shucks!" he interrupted, with a manner which, on the previous afternoon, she would have called rudeness. "That's nothin'. But, say, I brought home some grub. The chuck here was pretty tame. Guess you found that out last night." He looked about the room and she knew that he was taking note of her house-cleaning, but he made no remark on the subject.

"Well, let's get breakfast," she said, after a moment's pause and for lack of other conversation. "You must be hungry."

Dave's purchases had been liberal. They included fresh meat and vegetables, canned goods, coffee, rice and raisins. He laid the last three items on the table with a great dissembling of indifference, for he was immensely proud of them. They were unwonted items on the Elden bill of fare; he had bought them especially for her. But she busied herself at the breakfast without a thought of the epoch-marking nature of these purchases.

The doctor, who had been resting in the room with his patient, entered the kitchen. During the setting of the limb he had gradually become aware of the position of Irene in the household;

but had that not been so, one glance at the boy and girl as they now stood in the bright morning sunshine, he with his big, wiry frame, his brown face, his dark eyes, his black hair, she round and kilt and smooth, with the pink shining through her fair skin and the light of youth dancing in her gray eyes and the light of day glancing off her brown hair, must have told him they had sprung from widely separated stock. For one perilous moment he was about to apologize for the mistake made in the darkness, but some wise instinct closed his lips. But he wondered why she had not corrected him.

They were seated at breakfast when the senior Elden made his appearance. He had slept off his debauch and was as sober as a man in the throes of a choleric appetite may be. Seeing the strangers, he hesitated in his lurch toward the water-pail, steadied himself on wide-spread feet, very flat on the floor, and waved his right hand slowly in the air. Whether this was to be understood as a form of salutation or gesture of defiance was a matter of interpretation.

"Visitors," said the old man, a length. "Always welcome, in sure. Sh-s-cush me." He made his uncertain way to the water-bench, took a great drink and set about washing his face and hands, while the breakfast proceeded in silence. As his preparation neared completion Irene set a place at the table.

"Won't you sit down here, Mr. Elden?" she said.

There had been no introductions. Dave ate on in silence.

"Thank you," said the old man, and there was something in his voice which may have been emotion or may have been the huskiness of the heavy drinker's throat. The girl gave it the former explanation. As he took the proffered chair she saw in this old man shreds of dignity which the less refined eyes of his son had not distinguished. To Dave his father was an affliction to be borne; an unfair load laid on a boy who had done nothing to deserve this punishment. The miseries associated with his parentage had gone far to make him sour and moody. Irene at first had thought him rude and gloomy; flashes of humor had modified that opinion, but she had not yet learned that his disposition was naturally a buoyant one, weighed down by an environment which had made it soggy and unresponsive. In years to come she was to know what unguessed depths of character were to be revealed when that stoic nature was cross-sectioned by the blade of a keen and defiant passion.

Mr. Elden promptly engaged the doctor in conversation, and in a few moments had gleaned the main facts in connection with the accident and the father and daughter which it had brought so momentarily under his roof. He was quite sober now and his speech, although slovenly, was not indelicate. He was still able to pay to woman that respect which curbs the coarseness of a tongue for years subjected to little discipline.

After breakfast Irene attended to the wants of her father, and by this time the visiting doctor was manifesting impatience to be away. But Dave declared with prompt finality that the horses must rest until after noon, and the doctor, willy-nilly, spent the morning rambling in the foothills. Meanwhile the girl busied herself with work about the house, in which she was effecting a rapid transformation.

After the midday dinner Dave harnessed the team for the journey to town, but before leaving inquired of Irene if there were any special purchases, either personal or for the use of the house, which she would recommend. With some diffidence she mentioned one that was uppermost in her thoughts—soap, both laundry and toilet. Doctor Hardy had no hesitation in calling for a box of his favorite cigars and some new magazines, and took occasion to press into the boy's hand a bill out of all proportion to the value of the supplies requested.

The day was introductory to others that were to follow. Dave returned the next afternoon, riding his own horse and heavily laden with cigars, magazines and soap.

(Continued in Next Issue)

Fascinating Spring Hats at Satisfactory Prices. See them in the window. Highland-Holloway Co. 28

Governor McKelvie, chairman of the state capital commission, filed a report with the legislature showing progress to date. He says work will not be started until after this year's taxes are collected. He estimates that the delay in starting work will save the state two million dollars because of the reduction in the cost of building.

Smart Spring Hats. See them in the window at \$4.95. Highland-Holloway Co. 28

Two special appropriation bills were favorably reported by the house. One of them indicates that if one is going to acquire a bum leg he should go to the penitentiary to get it, then the state will pay the damages. The other indicates that former subjects of foreign countries are more entitled to damages than native born people, because of their kindness in becoming citizens.

Fascinating Spring Hats at Satisfactory Prices. See them in the window. Highland-Holloway Co. 28

Representative Epperson lost out in his attempt to have the road sign contract cancelled. He proposed to make it illegal to put up any signs along highways except under certain conditions which would have annulled the present contract.

The choir of the Christian church met Friday night at the home of Mrs. Herman Johnson. Hot gingerbread and coffee was served to the members and greatly appreciated. They will meet this week with Mrs. R. T. Jones, at 715 Toluca.

See the window of New Spring Millinery at \$4.95. Highland-Holloway Co. 28

Wanted to buy both your fat and stock hogs. O'Bannon and Neuswanger. Phone 71. 18tf

Dr. and Mrs. Minor Morris went to Omaha Wednesday noon where Dr. Morris will attend a meeting of the Nebraska division of the American college of surgeons. They will return tomorrow.

Smart Spring Hats. See them in the window at \$4.95. Highland-Holloway Co. 28

Mrs. Nellie Gibson of Pawlet, Neb., a sister of R. E. McCool of this city, is at the St. Joseph hospital suffering from inflammatory rheumatism. At last reports she was very low.

NOTICE

In County Court of Box Butte County, Nebraska.

In the matter of the estate of Martin Lally, Deceased.

To all persons interested in the estate of Martin Lally, deceased, O. W. Andrew having filed his petition, under oath, in this court, praying that administration of the estate of Martin Lally be dispensed with and for a decree determining who are the heirs of the said Martin Lally; it is ordered that a hearing be had on said petition at the County Court room in

said county on the 4th day of April, 1921, at 10 o'clock A. M., and that notice of the time and place fixed for said hearing be given to all persons interested in said estate by publication of this order for thirty days in the Alliance Herald, a newspaper printed and published in said county.

Dated February 23, 1921.
IRA E. TASH,
County Judge.
Feb 25-Mar 25

See the window of New Spring Millinery at \$4.95. Highland-Holloway Co. 28

Have you thought of Spring Repairs

The Nice Weather of the past week makes us think of the fine motoring days that are in store for us. What you should be asking yourself now is:

DOES THE OLD CAR NEED TUNING UP?

Most automobiles, after a winter of comparative inactivity, need some "going over" by capable mechanics before it is in going serviceable shape.

Right NOW, when work is comparatively slack, is the time for you to get the machine working so you can depend on it. If you let it go until spring comes you may want the car so badly some day you will use it anyway without the necessary tuning up. This will cost you money in the long run.

BRING THE CAR IN—WE WILL PUT IT SHAPE—DON'T RUN IT UNTIL IT BREAKS.

Special Value

In a Second-Hand Dodge Roadster

We have an 18 Model Dodge used Roadster that has been thoroughly overhauled, and will give good service. The price is attractive. If you are in the market for it,

ASK FOR PARTICULARS

Sturgeon's Garage

LEE STURGEON, Proprietor

The Community Bookkeeper

Did you ever appreciate that this bank keeps books for hundreds of the people of this community?

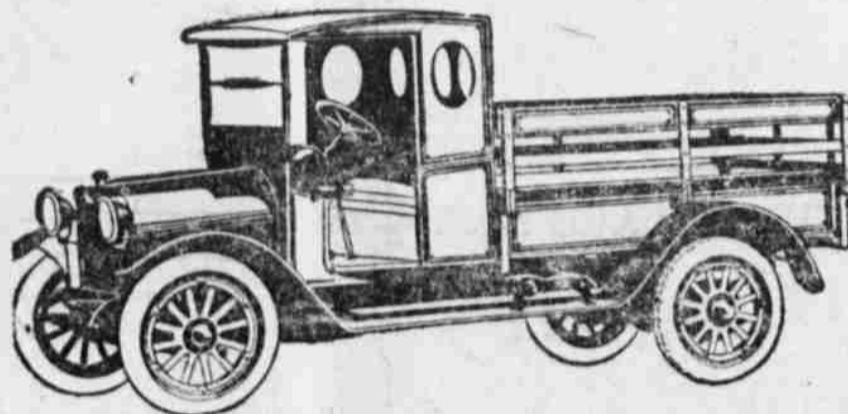
You deposit your money and it is credited to your account. You pay your bills by check and they are charged to your account. At the end of the month you have a complete record of your receipts and expenditures and a statement of your balance.

This is one of the ways in which this bank renders you an important service. It saves you time; it saves you inconvenience.

A Strong Bank is an indispensable asset to every community. Consult our officers in regard to your banking needs.

The First National Bank

The Reason and Result



The Speedwagon

THE REASON—

The reason for REO success is REO Quality!

It is being proved that no one can fool all of the people all of the time. During past months when enough automobiles have been available so that buyers could express their preference, the public's verdict was immediately apparent.

When the pinch came, REOS continued to sell—a fact that is the talk of the automobile industry.

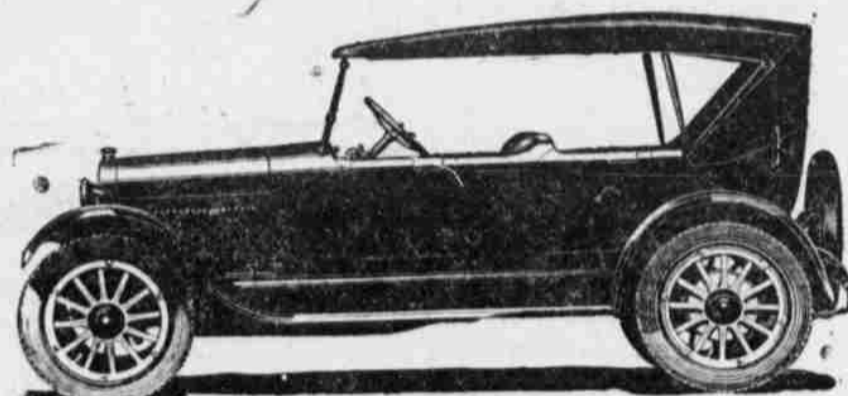
The Speed Wagon—always a leader among quality commercial cars—has gone far out in front in volume of sales. That was expected, for here Reo dominance is conceded.

But in the strictly passenger car field, REO is taking its rightful place among the leaders. Reo passenger cars are now among the leaders in volume of sales.

Given the opportunity to pick and choose, more people are choosing Reo passenger cars. People do appreciate quality.

There is something worth while beneath the hood of a REO. The essentials and vital parts of the car are REO designed and REO built. From the REO fan, through the wonderful T6 motor, through clutch, transmission, drive shaft, universal, gears, axles—all are REO. There is the superquality which the public appreciates.

That is the REASON.



Reo Six

THE RESULT—

And the result is that smoke pours steadily from the chimney at REO. Production has been maintained. It is the public's verdict that REO is an ESSENTIAL industry.

Not one of the large family of skilled Reo workers has been lost because of a shut down. There has been no loss of momentum. There has been a steady gain in efficiency. While most other automobile plants have been closed down from a month to two months, REO has kept steadily on.

As the spring buying season approaches, the public preference for REO becomes more and more pronounced. Orders are being filed and deliveries being made right along. The man who wants the Best in a motor car or truck, is investigating REO. You could do no better than to follow his example. Ask any one of these dealers to show you a REO car or truck:

A. H. Jones Co.

CALVIN D. WALKER, Manager
REO CARS AND TRUCKS