

# The Cow Puncher

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## CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

"He'll soon be well, don't you think, mister? He said he would be well when the holidays—"

But Dave's expression stopped the boy, whose own face went suddenly wild with fear. "He is well now, Charlie," he said, as steadily as he could. "It is all holidays now for him."

The match had burned out and the room was in utter darkness. Dave heard the child drawing his feet across the floor, then suddenly whimpering like a thing that had been mortally hurt. He groped toward him, and at length his fingers found his shock of hair. He drew the boy slowly into his arms; then very, very tight. . . . After all, they were orphans together.

"You will come with me," he said at length. "I will see that you are provided for. The doctor will soon be here, or we will meet him on the way, and he will make the arrangements for—the arrangements that have to be made, you know."

They retraced their steps toward the town, meeting the doctor at the broken bridge. Dave exchanged a few words with him in low tones, and they passed on. Soon they were swinging again through the city streets. Even with the developments of the evening pressing heavily upon his mind Dave could not resist the temptation to stop and listen for a moment to bulletins being read through a megaphone.

"The Kaiser has stripped off his British regalia," said the announcer. "He says he will never again wear a British uniform."

A chuckle of derisive laughter ran through the mob; then someone struck up a well-known refrain—"What the hell do we care?" Up and down the street voices caught up the chorus. . . . Within a year the bones of many in that thoughtless crowd, bleaching on the fields of Flanders, showed how much they cared.

Dave drove direct to the Hardy home. After some delay Irene met him at the door, and Dave explained the situation in a few words. "We must take care of him, Reenie," he said. "I feel a personal responsibility."

"Of course we will take him," she answered. "He will live here until we have a—some place of our own." Her face was bright with something which must be tenderness. "Bring him upstairs. We will allot him a room and introduce him first to—the bathroom. And tomorrow we shall have an excursion downtown, and get some new clothes for Charlie—Elden."

As they moved up the stairs Conward, who had been in another room in conversation with Mrs. Hardy, followed them unseen. The evening had been interminable for Conward. For three hours he had awaited word that his victim had been trapped, and for three hours no word had come. If his plans had miscarried, if Dave had discovered the plot, well—And here at length was Dave, engrossed in a very different matter. Conward followed them up the stairs.

Irene and Dave chatted with the boy for a few moments, then Irene turned to some arrangements for his comfort and Dave started downstairs. In the passage he was met by Conward.

"What are you doing here?" Dave demanded, as he felt his head beginning to swim in anger.

Conward leered only the more offensively, and walked down the stairs beside him. At the foot he coolly lit another cigarette. He held the match before him and calmly watched it burn out. Then he extended it toward Dave.

"You remember our wager, Elden. I present you with—a burned-out match."

"You liar!" cried Dave. "You infamous liar!"

"Ask her," Conward replied. "She will deny it, of course. All women do."

Dave felt his muscles tighten, and knew that in a moment he would tear his victim to pieces. As his clenched fist came to the side of his body it struck something hard. His revolver! He had forgotten; he was not in the habit of carrying it. In an instant he had Conward covered.

Dave did not press the trigger at once. He took a fierce delight in torturing the man who had wrecked his life—even while he told himself he could not believe his boast. Now he watched the color fade from Conward's cheek; the eyes stand out in his face; the livid blotches more livid still; the cigarette drop from his nerveless lips.

"You are a brave man, Conward," he said, and there was the rasp of hate and contempt in his voice. "You are a very brave man."

Mrs. Hardy, sensing something wrong, came out from her sitting room. With a little cry she swooned away.

Conward tried to speak, but words stuck in his throat. With a dry tongue he licked his dried lips.

"Do you believe in hell, Conward?"

Dave continued. "I've always had some doubt myself, but in thirty seconds—you'll know."

Irene appeared on the stairway. For a moment her eyes refused to grasp the scene before them: Conward cowering terror-stricken; Dave fierce, steely, implacable, with his revolver lined on Conward's brain. Through some strange whim of her mind her thought in that instant flew back to the bottles on the posts of the Elden ranch, and Dave breaking five out of six on the gallop. Then suddenly she became aware of one thing only. A tragedy was being enacted before her eyes.

"Oh, don't, Dave! Don't, don't shoot him!" she cried, flying down the remaining steps. Before Dave could grasp her purpose she was upon him, had clutched his revolver, had wrapped her arms about his. "Don't, don't, Dave!" she pleaded. "For my sake don't do—that!"

Her words were tragically unfortunate. For a moment Dave stood as one paralyzed; then his heart dried up within him.

"So that's the way of it!" he said, as he broke her grip, and the horror in his own eyes would not let him read the sudden horror in hers. "All right; take it," and he placed the revolver in her hand. "You should know what to do with it." And before 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; it was incapable of assorting 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 hillsides, 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.

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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 cobwebs. 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 when he found himself at the little nook in the rock where he and Irene had sat that afternoon when they had first 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 a hundred times—ever since morning—ever since Bert Morrison called up 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?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Pacific Coast Line. The United States, with its islands, has a greater Pacific coast line than any other nation, possibly equal to those of China and Japan combined, says Gas Logic.

## TRAPPED BY GIRL, SLAYER IS SHOT

### Man Wanted for Murder and Robbery Is Run Down by Girl.

Santa Barbara.—Clarence A. Wallace, wanted for bank robbery and murder in Maryland, where an \$8,000 reward dead or alive will be paid for him, was shot and probably fatally injured in the midst of a crowd at the post office here. Wallace was trapped through a letter which he had received from a woman in Chicago to his atlas, H. P. Daley, General Delivery, here. The work of Miss Katherine Higgins, the mail clerk, who delayed him



He Was Shot Once Across the Chest

at the window until Detectives W. F. Marquette and Fred Lavery arrived, is given much credit for his arrest.

Although the shooting occurred in a crowd, only a twelve-year-old boy was hurt. His arm was badly bruised by a spent bullet.

A buzzer connected with the delivery window warned the watchers. When Wallace was ordered to surrender he put up a stiff fight. He was shot once across the chest, once through the stomach and once in the back.

When taken into the postmaster's office to await the doctor Wallace gasped: "I am the man you want. Don't save me. I'd rather die. If I go back to Maryland they will hang me."

Wallace robbed the Frederick County bank two months ago, was arrested and escaped. A posse started after him. A young returned soldier led the posse. Unarmed, he caught up with Wallace, who turned and shot in cold blood, when the youth threw up his hands and begged him not to fire.

## CAN'T STOP POKER PLAYING

### Technicality in Law Puts Stop to Crusade in Canadian Town.

Renfrew, Can.—Renfrew town council finds that it cannot stop male citizens from playing poker. A crusade against poker in Renfrew has fallen down because of a technicality in the law.

Women complained to Mayor Bolan that their husbands were losing money through indulging in the game. A detective was brought to town and the council was supplied with names, dates and places. Everything was ready for arrests when the town solicitor advised against court proceedings unless it could be shown that the persons on whose premises the gambling occurred were "taking a rakeoff."

The detective found that nobody was thus profiting. Now the council finds itself just where it began, but with considerable information as to how poker is played in Ontario communities.

## Court Decides Which of Two Is Man's Widow.

New York.—Vice Chancellor John Griffin of Jersey City held that Mrs. Anna Solomon Dunken Davidson of Garden street, Hoboken, is the legal widow of Werner Dunken, who died at New Haven in 1916. Mrs. Minnie Kaiser Dunken, who proved a ceremonial marriage with Dunken in 1901, at Passaic, and who said she lived with him until he died, claimed to be his lawful widow.

The evidence disclosed that Dunken lived with the first woman nearly 20 years, was known as her husband, and deserted her for the other woman. If the decision stands, Mrs. Anna Davidson will share Dunken's \$15,000 estate with his three sisters.

## Boy's Rifle Killed Mother.

Holton, Mich.—A bullet from a rifle, given William Noble, 14-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Wellington Noble, as a Christmas present, killed the boy's mother when the firearm was accidentally discharged.

## SALTS IF BACKACHE AND KIDNEYS HURT

### Stop Eating Meat for a While if Your Bladder Is Troubling You.

When you wake up with backache and dull misery in the kidney region it generally means you have been eating too much meat, says a well-known authority. Meat forms uric acid which overworks the kidneys in their effort to filter it from the blood and they become sort of paralyzed and loggy. When your kidneys get sluggish and clog you must relieve them, like you relieve your bowels; removing all the body's urinous waste, else you have backache, sick headache, dizzy spells; your stomach sours, tongue is coated, and when the weather is bad you have rheumatic twinges. The urine is cloudy, full of sediment, channels often get sore, water scalds and you are obliged to seek relief two or three times during the night.

Either consult a good, reliable physician at once or get from your pharmacist about four ounces of Jad Salts; take a tablespoonful in a glass of water before breakfast for a few days and your kidneys will then act fine. This famous salt is made from the acid of grapes and lemon juice, combined with lithia, and has been used for generations to clean and stimulate sluggish kidneys, also to neutralize acids in the urine so it no longer irritates, thus ending bladder weakness.

Jad Salts is a life saver for regular meat eaters. It is inexpensive, cannot injure and makes a delightful, effervescent lithia-water drink.—Adv.

## A Mouthful.

The Intense Miss Miggins—Do you not think that the communists, by the doctrine of syndicalism and mass action, shall ultimately develop an insurgency which shall impose the soviet principle on industry as a whole? The dense Mr. Boggs—You said it!—Judge.

## NOSE CLOGGED FROM A COLD OR CATARRH

### Apply Cream in Nostrils to Open Up Air Passages.

Ah! What relief! Your clogged nostrils open right up, the air passages of your head are clear and you can breathe freely. No more hawking, snuffling, mucous discharge, headache, dizziness—no struggling for breath at night, your cold or catarrh is gone.

Don't stay stuffed up! Get a small bottle of Ely's Cream Balm from your druggist now. Apply a little of this fragrant, antiseptic cream in your nostrils, let it penetrate through every air passage of the head; soothe and heal the swollen inflamed mucous membrane, give you instant relief. Ely's Cream Balm is just what every cold and catarrh sufferer has been seeking. It's just splendid.—Adv.

He is a wise man who makes the mistake of giving a woman's age too young.

The war has made table linen very valuable. The use of Red Cross Ball Blue will add to its wearing qualities. Use it and see. All grocers, 7c.

Much of woman's happiness is due to her ability to improve on nature.

## MY HEAD!



When the head feels thick or aches, when one feels all out-of-sorts—perhaps a coated tongue—it is the signal that poisons are accumulating in the system, and should be cleaned out at once.

Sleepiness after meals, biliousness, acidity of the stomach, heartburn, offensive breath and allied ailments result from auto-intoxication or self-poisoning.

Take castor oil, or procure at the drug store, a pleasant vegetable laxative, called Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets, composed of May-apple, aloes and jalap.

Kansas City, Kans.—"Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets have been my favorite family medicine for many years. I raised quite a large family and from the time my children were small I always gave them the 'Pleasant Pellets.' They were easy to take and pleasant in every way, never causing distress. For sluggish liver, sick-headaches, constipation or biliousness there is no medicine that can equal the 'Pleasant Pellets.' I found them a great help to me in bringing up my family in as much as they have many times warded off sick spells my children would otherwise have had."—MRS. MARY E. BRADLEY, 932 Homer Ave.



Acid-Stomach Makes 9 Out of 10 People Suffer

Doctors declare that more than 70 non-organic diseases can be traced to Acid-Stomach. Starting with indigestion, heartburn, belching, food-repeating, bloating, sour, easy stomach, the entire system eventually becomes affected, every vital organ suffering in some degree or other. You see these victims of Acid-Stomach everywhere—people who are subject to nervousness, headache, insomnia, biliousness—people who suffer from rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica and aches and pains all over the body. It is safe to say that about 9 people out of 10 suffer to some extent from Acid-Stomach.

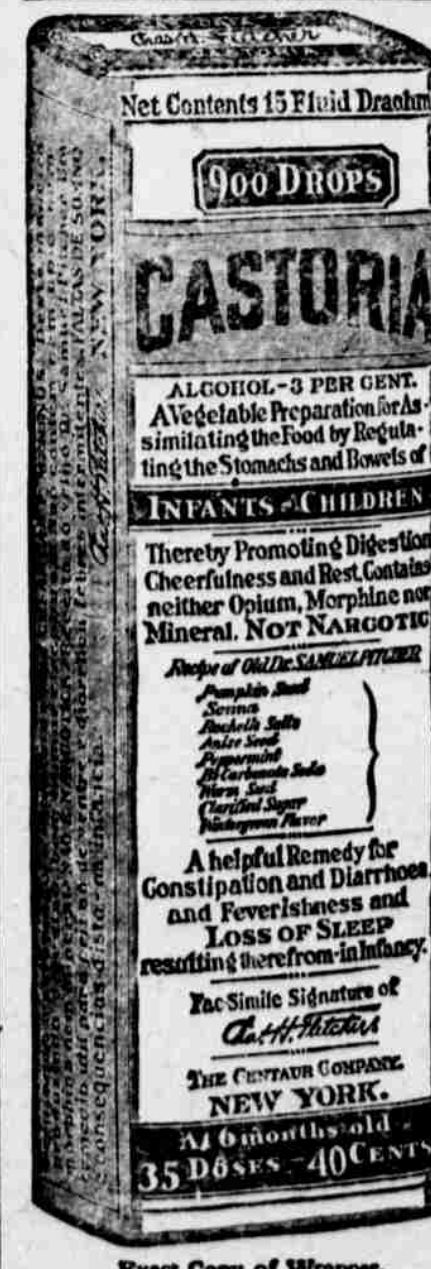
If you suffer from stomach trouble, even if you do not feel any stomach distress, yet are weak and ailing, feel tired and dragged out, lack "pep" and enthusiasm and know that something is wrong although you cannot locate the exact cause of your trouble—you naturally want to get back your grip on health as quickly as possible. Then take EATONIC, the wonderful modern remedy that brings quick relief from pain of indigestion, belching, gas, bloating, etc. See your stomach strong, clean and sweet. See how your general health improves—how quickly the old-time vim, vigor and vitality come back! Get a big 50c box of EATONIC from your druggist today. It is guaranteed to please you. If you are not satisfied your druggist will refund your money.

## EATONIC (FOR YOUR ACID-STOMACH)

### Cuticura Talcum is Fragrant and Very Healthful

Soap 25c, Ointment 25 and 50c, Talcum 25c.

W. N. U., LINCOLN, NO. 8-1920.



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