

Cattle Kingdom

By
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WNU Service

CHAPTER VIII—Continued

Behind Marian's shadowed silhouette the window glass itself shattered, as if it had exploded inward; out in the brush sounded the ringing crack of a rifle. Then there was silence and the window against which Marian had stood was empty except for the lamp-lit gleam of its shattered glass.

Wheeler's breath jerked in his throat; he dropped to the ground and raced for the house.

In the dark beside the shattered window Douglas was holding the girl in his arms, and though she clung to him, Wheeler saw that the wagon boss was holding her up. He heard Douglas say, "Are you hurt? Are you—"

Billy Wheeler cried out, "In God's name, Marian—"

Marian's voice said shakily, "I'm all right."

"You hit?"

"No."

"Get a gun!" said Val Douglas crazily. "We was standing here, and somebody took a shot at—"

Wheeler turned and ran for the bunk house. Half way he almost crashed into Tulare Callahan.

"What's up?"

"Get the boys out," Wheeler told him. "To hell with saddles, but get ropes and guns. Somebody fired into the layout—we've got to try to stampee over him in the brush."

Behind the 94 lay the buckbrush stood ragged, much of it shoulder high to a mounted man; in its crooked brakes the hard sandy ground showed barren in the light of the near stars.

With some difficulty Billy Wheeler restrained Gil Baker and Steve Hurley from spurring their ponies headlong into the brush, as if they were trying to jump a bunch of steers.

"Stick together, move slow, and keep stopping to listen," Wheeler said. "That's our only chance."

They trailed into the bush slowly, single file, Wheeler in the lead. He had accidentally mounted a horse that believed in ghosts and it moved sidelong, stretching its nose warily at the brush shadows, blowing long uneasy whoops. Repeatedly they halted to sit listening.

For an hour they combed the dark brush, alternately walking their horses and listening.

Not until they came out at the foot of a barren rise did they realize that they had wandered almost a mile from their starting point. When you have seen one thicket of buckbrush by starlight you have seen them all. They had pushed through a hundred thickets, in which a man could have hidden under the very feet of their horses—yet in that mile of country there were a thousand thickets more. The riders were grim and tight-mouthed.

Horse Dunn met them at the corals. He had been prowling all over the place, rifle on his arm. He spoke low-voiced, but no one of them

say something, so he said the first thing come into his head. Every sign we got points to the fact that Lon Magoon was killed, in his own saddle, and on his own horse, and at Short Crick."

"I'm thinking now," said Billy Wheeler, "that we can prove that one way or the other—right here and now."

"How?"

"We've still got his saddle, haven't we?"

"It's still under my bunk."

"Let me see it."

Horse Dunn stared at him irritably for a moment, then picked up a lamp with a jerk, and led the way to the clean bare room in which he lived. By the yellow light of the lamp the fine old saddles on their racks against the wall glinted cleanly from silverwork and steel. Dunn sat down on a box and hooked his elbows on the table behind him.

"Horse, how big a man is this Lon Magoon? About my size?"

"Hell, no! Not by eight inches. Little short wiry feller—put you in mind of a grasshopper, or a flea."

Wheeler hauled out Magoon's saddle. Billy measured the length of the stirrup leather with his arm—stirrup in armpit, fingers upon the tree.

"I stand five-eleven," Wheeler said. "Yet these stirrups are too long for me to ride. Horse, the man that rode this saddle was over six feet tall."

Horse came across the room in two strides and dropped to one knee beside Billy. "Damn it, I know that's Magoon's hull!"

"You mean it was Magoon's hull. You can see the short-rig bends worn into the stirrup leathers. But since then the leathers have been let down long, and laced there with rawhide whang."

Horse Dunn measured the stirrup leathers against his own arm. Then he forked the saddle where it lay, jamming his feet into the stirrups.

"Tall as me," he breathed, unbelieving. He stared at the saddle incredulously for several moments.

"Do you reckon," he said at last, "that infernal old lion hunter would let down those stirrups, just to get us balled up?"

"Look at the wear on the stirrup leather. The saddle has been ridden since the stirrups were let down."

Horse Dunn got up slowly and went back to his seat on the box. For a long time he sat staring at the floor. When at last he drew a deep breath and got up, his movements were those of a man preoccupied.

He got out a roll of adhesive tape, pulled off a boot and woolen sock, and began to tape up the outside of his ankle bone, which appeared to be skinned. "I've got to take a hammer to those spurs," he said, his mind on other things. "Seems like they—"

"Horse—Coffee was right! The man that died in this saddle was not Lon Magoon."

Suddenly Dunn stood up, a shaggy towering figure, staring redly at Billy Wheeler. "Then, in God's name, who's dead?"

Wheeler regarded him without expression. Within the hour, a shadowy hunch had come over him. He knew that he had no proof for the thing that was in his mind; yet somehow it stood clear and plain. He went to the fireplace, and picked up an old branding iron that had been in use as a fire poker. He squatted on his heels, and with this sooty iron began to make marks on Dunn's clean-swept floor.

"Saying that the 94 is here," he said, marking a cross, "and Short Crick over here; then here lies that broken badlands called the Red Sleep. Seems to me there used to be a trail across the Red Sleep, leading over to Pahranaagat."

"Yes, sure. But—"

Horse Dunn waited; Billy Wheeler studied the floor. "Where would a man be coming from, passing over Short Crick toward the 94? Maybe—Pahranaagat?"

"Could," Horse admitted dubiously.

"That little railroad spur ends there."

"Sometimes," Horse Dunn made a sudden contribution, "Lon Magoon has shipped a few stolen beef carcasses out of Pahranaagat."

Wheeler nodded. "From Pahranaagat the spur runs down the Little Minto to Plumias, then—let me see—"

"Cheat Creek, Monitor, Sikes Crossing," Dunn supplied; "and so to the main stem."

"And so to the main stem," Wheeler repeated. "And maybe an old-timer, a saddle man, working toward the 94 by train, would figure it was better to come by Pahranaagat—and there pick up a horse?"

They were silent, and the background of the outer night seemed uncommonly still—perhaps because Old Man Coffee's hounds were gone.

"A saddle-minded man," Wheeler repeated, "coming from—a say—Flagstaff." He threw the branding iron into the fireplace; it sent up a puff of white ash, against the black

opening. "Horse, where was Bob Flagg last heard from?"

Dunn's voice came out thickly. "Flagstaff," he said.

CHAPTER IX

Horse Dunn sat relaxed, staring morosely at the floor. In his eyes a dark fire glowed. Wheeler wondered what ugly and shadowy things the old man was seeing. Perhaps, Wheeler thought, he would not wish to see in his life the like of what Horse Dunn was seeing, as he sat looking at the floor.

Finally Horse Dunn jerked to his feet with an abrupt impatience. "This is all pipe smoke," he said. "For a minute you threw me up in the air with that bunk. But hell! You figure Bob come here a way no man would ever think of coming. There's better than a hundred million people in this country, and Bob Flagg is one of 'em, so you figure that maybe it was him got killed!"

"Well, we might anyway check up at Pahranaagat. There isn't so much travel up the Little Minto but what we could find out if Bob Flagg came that way."

"I'll send Val Douglas over there tomorrow. I sure don't aim to leave any stone unturned. But if a guess is an inch long, you sure jumped a mile."

"Maybe," Wheeler admitted.

Horse Dunn took a turn of the room and the fighting spirit that had flared up in his eyes burned low and smoky again. "This country's gone to hell in a handbasket. I've never asked for any more than justice, and I've dealt out nothing less. But where can you get it now? A man's hands are tied. There was more honesty in the old six-gun than in a thousand courts of so-called law. I'd give 'em their cock-eyed country. I'd wash my hands of the whole works, and good riddance—if it wasn't for the girl."

It always came back to Marian. The old man didn't dare lose because of what it meant to the girl; he had labored for her too long, in years that for any other man would have been the twilight years of his life.

She came before Wheeler's eyes now, between himself and Horse Dunn, almost as clearly as if she had really been in the room.

Dunn was saying, "Know what I'd like to do? I'd like to cut out for the Argentine. Where a man's cows have a chance to turn around, by God, I'd—"

"Argentine, hell!" Billy exploded at him. "If I'd been running this outfit, this situation would never have come up or started to come up!"

"I suppose you'd have sold out," Dunn said, a hard edge on his voice.

"Maybe and maybe not. But I wouldn't have gone cow crazy, range crazy, until I couldn't afford to work my stock!"

Strangely, Horse did not anger. Wheeler saw that the Old Man thought his tirade was merely based on youth and ignorance, which he had seen in unlimited quantities before.

"Maybe," Dunn said now, "you'd have kept the 94 a little one-horse spread—in the best of shape. But that ain't the question now. We're where we are, and there's no use fighting over what went before."

"I can save it yet," Wheeler told him rashly. "I can throw a hundred thousand into the 94."

"I didn't know you could swing that much. You got it, Billy?"

"What I haven't got of it—I can get."

Horse Dunn studied him, sadly, a long time. "That's an offer, is it?" he said at last.

"On one condition. That you give me a free hand, to hire, fire, buy or sell, land or cattle, for three years."

"I believe," said Dunn, "I'd even do that."

"It's a deal, then?"

"No! You and me'll never make a deal like that!"

"It's your out," Wheeler told him, "and it's your only out. Let me take the finance and the outfit—and all the other ruction falls to pieces."

And now Horse Dunn's eyes blazed again, and his voice crackled. "You'll never put a dime in this brand!"

"It's her brand," Wheeler reminded him. "You willing to let it bust up and go down, and the girl and her mother without a cent?"

"Let 'er bust—before it ever hangs on your dough!"

"But damnation—why?"

"You want to know why? I'll tell you why! Because you want that girl! You want that girl—you think I'm blind? But she don't want you."



"Isn't This Pretty Early? Couldn't You Sleep?"

I'd no sooner put her in your debt than I'd sell her to you outright. You're only making the offer because you're in love with Marian."

"You're crazy! I'm making the offer because I think I can come out on it."

"You want the girl," Horse persisted.

"You old fool—" Wheeler held his voice down—"do you think I'd ever expect to get her that way? Do you think I'd want her on the basis of—"

"Anyway, that's all over and done, two years back," Wheeler lied. "Once she could have had me body and soul. But that's all over. I wouldn't tie myself up, not now, to her or anyone else."

"You lie," said Horse calmly.

"Horse, if you'll let me take—"

"Never a dime of your money in her brand," Horse said with utter finality.

Wheeler turned in that night feeling old and grim.

It was still dark as Billy Wheeler let himself noiselessly into the cook shack and lighted a lamp. He found himself cold biscuits; and in a huge pot on the back of the stove he found bitter coffee above a banked fire.

He had about finished washing down his cold biscuits when he was annoyed to discover that another early riser was about. Someone was walking quietly toward the cook shack. Hurriedly he blew out his light, gulped down half a cup of dregs, and let himself out of the kitchen, anxious to be on his way without conversation.

Then, rounding the corner of the cook shack he almost ran into Marian.

"Morning, Billy." He saw that she was wearing belted overalls and boots.

"Isn't this pretty early? Couldn't you sleep?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Plaids Outstanding in Fall Modes

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



PLAIDS on autumn style program? We hope to tell you! Fact is, the college-faring and the school-going (from kindergarten to high school age) girl that fails to make a right smart showing of plaid in her fall wardrobe simply is not "in it" when it comes to swank in dress. There's no doubt about it. The colorful, youthful practical plaids fit into the campus, the office and the great outdoor scheme of things simply perfect.

All sorts of plaids are on the autumn fabric list from high-tone dressy plaids of silk velvet and handsome wool weaves down to the most utilitarian, practical, washable types—the kind that go bicycling along dusty roads and then come out "fresh as a daisy" after each tubbing.

Bicycling is a fad so important nowadays designers recognize they must create fashions tuned to the sport. The new sturdy washable plaids are proving most likable for outfits of this sort. The girl on the "bike" as shown in the group illustrated is fashionably and sensibly frocked in a dependable completely shrunken washable plaid that gives this rider the look of being keenly style-minded.

The schoolgirl centered in the picture is likewise alertly fashion-conscious in that she also selects plaid for her voguish blouse, and it's safe to say she will be getting a lot of wear out of it besides enjoying that feeling of confidence it brings to be appropriately clad for the occasion.

Another way to subscribe to the plaid rage that is now featuring in every phase of fashion is to wear a true clan plaid skirt and neckerchief with your new fall sweater as shown to the right in the group.

This most commendable outfit is sure to prove an inspiration to the schoolgirl. It was shown at a recent fall style clinic held in the Merchandise Mart in Chicago.

Viewing the new fall fabrics one becomes fully convinced that plaids as a fashion "must" are definitely here. It is interesting to note that the more classic plaids are labeled each with its, clan name. Also the many smart ways to wear plaids makes them all the more intriguing.

In enrolling as a plaid enthusiast we suggest that you line your jacket to match your plaid blouse, or wear a plaid dress matched to the lining of your coat, or top a plaid skirt with a bright velveteen jacket, or enliven your fur coat or your fleece coat with a stunning plaid lining. They are showing in the stores daring coats in forest green, radiant autumn browns, and the very new deep sapphire blue with bold plaid linings in giddy contrast.

Plaid velvet dresses to wear under fur coats is another outcome of the present craze for plaids. You can also find cunning jackets of plaid velveteen. Some are bolero versions with plaid belts to match. If it is just a touch of plaid you favor, buy a dozen or so of the new plaid composition buttons and let them go marching down the front of your dark velveteen dress or coat. You can get all sorts of plaid accessories. There are ensembles of beret, bag and belt. There are belt and triangle-scarf sets to be had in plaid.

BE PENCIL-SLIM
By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



FASHION STRESSES FABRIC ELEGANCE

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**
Fabrics play a most important part this year, and by their richness explain the apparent simplicity of the styles which are the greatest challenge to the dressmaker. Velvets, lames, brocades, laces, tulle are all in the picture.

Lace becomes a happy medium for day dresses, almost severe in their simplicity. These may be relieved by rich belts, patent trimmings, etc. Lighter laces in silk or rayon are combined with a colored fabric lining for day dresses or two tones used in combination as Worth has done. Lelong takes a heavy white wool lace for a hip-length top of a dress which ends in a simple black velvet skirt, with four rows of the velvet used at the side front. Patou offers rosepoint collars, cuff or bodice trim with severe dresses—but real rosepoint. Schiaparelli makes lace of gold cord for three huge medallions on the top of a two-piece effect black marocain. While dresses are simple in effect, fantasy goes into the headgear.

Novelties in fabrics include tweed type lames and lace type prints.

Style Society Stressed for Chic Daytime Costume
At the height of the vogue for romantic fashions, minuscule murmurs are echoing from the ranks of style leaders who favor simple garments for wear before the sun goes down.

"Sobriety of the best quality" is the formula advanced by a leading French couturiere as the prime requisite of daytime chic.

"Wear tailored suits and little sweaters," she advises, "but have them fitted by a good tailor and made of the finest wool. See that each accessory is equally first grade, for one inappropriate gadget can spoil the entire costume."

Household Questions

Inexpensive Fish Savory.—With a smoked haddock, make this savory fish dish. Remove the flesh from the haddock, pick out skin and bone, then chop the fish finely. Season with a pinch of pepper, and parsley and mix with a little butter and two tablespoons of milk. Stir over a gentle heat until hot, add a few drops of lemon juice, then serve on hot buttered toast.

To Soften Sugar.—When brown sugar becomes hard or lumpy, place it in a shallow pan in the oven for a few minutes.

For the Seamstress.—Before stitching heavy materials, like khaki, duck or canvas, rub hard soap over the hems and seams. The needle will then penetrate the material more easily.

Salad Eggs.—Hard boil the required number of eggs, then remove the shells. Arrange the eggs in a dish on a bed of fresh, crisp lettuce leaves, then sprinkle with mayonnaise and grated cheese. Garnish with sliced tomatoes and a ring of cucumber. Serve with cheese straws or cheese-flavored biscuits.

Discouraging Ants.—Prompt disposal of garbage and other waste materials around the home will aid in the control of ants.

How Constipation Causes Gas, Nerve Pressure

When you are constipated two things happen. FIRST: Wastes swell up the bowels and press on nerves in the digestive tract. This nerve pressure causes headache, a dull, lazy feeling, bilious spells, loss of appetite and dizziness. SECOND: Partly digested food starts to decay forming GAS, bringing on sour stomach (acid indigestion), and heartburn, bloating you up until you sometimes gasp for breath.

Then you spend many miserable days. You can't eat. You can't sleep. Your stomach is sour. You feel tired out, grouchy and miserable.

To get the complete relief you seek you must take **ADLERIKIA**. You must relieve the GAS. 2. You must clear the bowels and GET THAT PRESSURE OFF THE NERVES. As soon as offending wastes are washed out you feel marvelously refreshed, blues vanish, the world looks bright again.

There is only one product on the market that gives you the **DOUBLE ACTION** you need. It is **ADLERIKIA**. This efficient carminative cathartic relieves that awful GAS at once. It often removes bowel congestion in half an hour. No waiting for overnight relief. **ADLERIKIA** acts on the stomach and both bowels. Ordinary laxatives act on the lower bowel only.

ADLERIKIA has been recommended by many doctors and druggists for 25 years. No gripping, no after effects. Just **QUICK** results. Try **ADLERIKIA** today. You'll say you have never used such an efficient intestinal cleanser.

HOW LONG CAN A THREE-QUARTER WIFE HOLD HER HUSBAND?

You have to work at marriage. You have to work at it. Men may be soft, unsympathetic, but that's the way they're made and you might as well realize it.

When your back aches and your nerves scream, don't take it out on your husband. He can't possibly know how you feel.

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Don't be a three-quarter wife, take **LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND** and Go "Smiling Through."

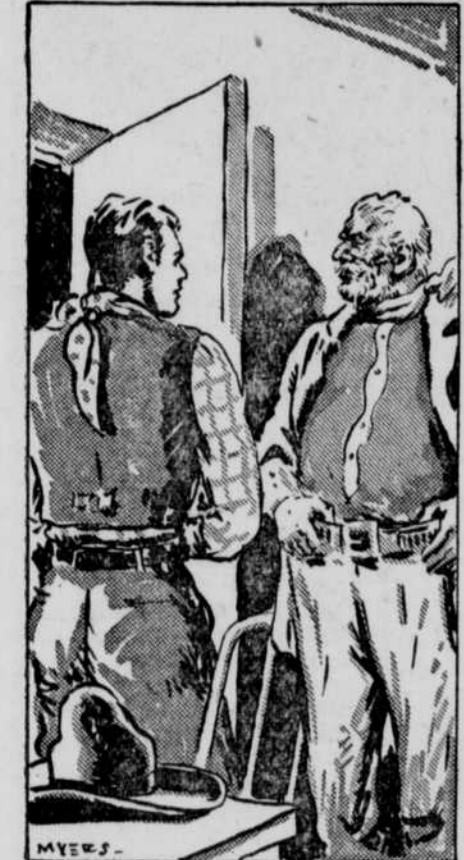
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"I Don't Believe He Knows a Horse Track From a Hound's Ear."

would have crossed him then, any more than they would have fooled with a 14-hand silvertip. His words came out as hard as pieces of rock.

"Go on and turn in," he told them. "This is most likely all for tonight."

Once they were inside, Horse demanded of Wheeler, "What the devil got into Old Man Coffee?"

"Whatever it was got into him, it's going to cost us plenty."

"I don't believe he knows a horse track from a hound's ear," Dunn declared angrily. "He puts me in mind of some old moss-horn—he paws and blows and hollers, but what's he know about it when he gets through? Nothing."

"I'm not so sure," Billy Wheeler said.

"Name one thing he found out!"

"He figured out that the murdered man was not Magoon."

Horse snorted in disgust. "I don't believe it. Coffee thought he had to

Azaleas of the South Imported From France; Plant Brought From Toulouse

Azalea time in the deep South is one of great joy and exquisite beauty, writes Annabella Neusbaum in Nature Magazine. When the azaleas, evergreen shrubs of delicate foliage, burst their buds, masses of flowers cover the bush until, its foliage hidden, the entire plant is a glowing mass of living color.

The gracious charm of old Mobile, with her quaint old streets and spacious avenues lined with magnificent century-old live oaks and magnolias, provides a perfect setting for the azaleas and camellias. Today, Mobile has a beautiful "Azalea trail," a road some fifteen miles long that leads one through streets literally banked with these flowers. The plants range from two to twenty feet in height, the reigning color being a glorious deep pink.

The history of the azaleas is closely interwoven with the romantic history and tradition of the old South.

They came to the New World shortly after Bienville founded Mobile in 1711. From old family records we find that Francois Ludgere Diard, native Mobilian and direct descendant of one of the original settlers, returned to France to visit relatives in Toulouse. At the time of his visit the azaleas of southern France were blooming. He was so impressed with their dazzling splendor that on his return to the New World he brought home three varieties: a deep glowing pink known today as Pride of Mobile; a lavender-pink one, and a snowy-white one. Today, gorgeous specimens of these original plants can be seen in the oldest gardens—some of them perhaps a century and a half old, 20 feet high, and spreading out to a diameter of 100 feet. Now they are found all along the Gulf Coast, from Texas to Florida, up the Atlantic seaboard to South Carolina.

Then, rounding the corner of the cook shack he almost ran into Marian.

"Morning, Billy." He saw that she was wearing belted overalls and boots.

"Isn't this pretty early? Couldn't you sleep?"

"It's a deal, then?"