

HEART OF THE SUNSET

By Rex Beach

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CHAPTER XV—Continued.

"Dream-man!" she murmured. As consciousness returns after a swoon, so did realization return to Alaire Austin. Faintly, uncertainly at first, then with a swift, strong effort, she pushed herself out of Dave's reluctant arms. They stood apart, frightened. Dave's gaze was questioning. Alaire began to tremble and to struggle with her breath.

"Are we—mad?" she gasped. "What have we done?"

"There's no use fighting. It was here—it was bound to come out. Oh, Alaire—!"

"Don't!" She shook her head, and, avoiding his outstretched hands, went to the edge of the veranda and leaned weakly against a pillar, with her head in the crook of her arm. Dave followed her, but the words he spoke were scarcely intelligible.

Finally she raised her face to his: "No! It is useless to deny it—now that we know. But I didn't know, until a moment ago."

"I've known all the time—ever since the first moment I saw you," he told her, hoarsely. "To me you're all there is; nothing else matters. And you love me! I wonder if I'm awake."

"Dream-man," she repeated, more slowly. "Oh, why did you come so late?"

"So late?"

"Yes. We must think it out, the best way we can. I wonder what you think of me?"

"You must know. There's no need for excuses; there's nothing to explain, except the miracle that such great happiness could come to a fellow like me."

"Happiness? It means anything but that. I was miserable enough before, what shall I do now?"

"Why, readjust your life," he cried, roughly. "Surely you won't hesitate after this?"

But Alaire did not seem to hear him. She was staring out into the night again. "What a failure I must be!" she murmured, finally. "I suppose I should have seen this coming, but—I didn't. And in his house, too! This dress is his, and these jewels—everything!" She held up her hands and stared curiously at the few rings she wore, as if seeing them for the first time. "How does that make you feel?"

Dave stirred; there was resentment in his voice when he answered: "Your husband has sacrificed his claim to you, as everybody knows. To my mind he has lost his rights. You're mine, mine!" He waved a vigorous gesture of defiance. "I'll take you away from him at any cost. I'll see that he gives you up, somehow. You're all I have."

"Of course the law provides a way, but you wouldn't, couldn't, understand how I feel about divorce." The mere mention of the word was difficult, and caused Alaire to clench her hands. "We're both too shaken to talk sanely now, so let's wait—"

"There's something you must understand before we go any further," Dave insisted. "I'm poor; I haven't a thing I can call my own, so I'm not sure I have any right to take you away from all this." He turned a hostile eye upon their surroundings.

"Money means so little, and it's so easy to be happy without it," Alaire told him. "But I'm not altogether poor. Of course everything here is Ed's, but I have enough. All my life I've had everything except the very thing you offer—and how I've longed for that! How I've envied other people! Do you think I'll be allowed, somehow, to have it?"

"Yes! I've something to say about that. You gave me the right when you gave that kiss."

Alaire shook her head. "I'm not so sure. It seems easy now, while you are here, but how will it seem later? I'm in no condition at this minute to reason. Perhaps, as you say, it is all a dream; perhaps this feeling I have is just a passing frenzy."

Dave laughed softly, confidently. "It's too new yet for you to understand—but wait. It is frenzy, witchery—yes, and more. Tomorrow, and every day after, it will grow and grow and grow! Trust me, I've watched it in myself."

"So you cared for me from the very first?" Alaire questioned. It was the woman's curiosity, the woman's hunger to hear over and over again that truth which never fails to thrill and yet never fully satisfies.

"Oh, even before that, I think! When you came to my fire that evening in the chaparral, I knew every line of your face, every movement of your body, every tone of your voice, as a man knows and recognizes his ideal. But it took time for me to realize all that you meant to me."

Alaire nodded. "Yes, and it must have been the same with me." She met his eyes frankly, but when he reached toward her she held him away. "No, dear. Not yet, not again, not until we have the light. It would be better for us both if you went away now."

"No, no! Oh, I have so much to say! I've been dumb all my life, and you've just opened my eyes."

"Please! After I've decided what to do—once I feel that I can control myself better—I'll send for you. But you must promise not to come until then, for you would only make it harder."

At last he took her hand and kissed her wrist, just over her pulse, as if to speed a message to her heart, then into her rosy palm he whispered a tender something that thrilled her.

She stood white, motionless, against the dim illumination of the porch until he had gone, and not until the last sound of his motor had died away did she stir. Then she pressed her own lips to the palm he had caressed and walked slowly to her room.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Crash.

The several days following Dave's unexpected call at Las Palmas Alaire spent in a delightful reverie. She had so often wrestled with the question of divorce that she had begun to weary of it. She gave up trying, at length, and for the time being rested content in the knowledge that she loved and was loved. A week passed while she hugged her thoughts to her breast, and then one evening she rode home to learn that Ed had returned from San Antonio.

But Ed was ill, and he did not appear at dinner. It had been years since either had dared invade the other's privacy, and now, inasmuch as her husband did not send for her, Alaire did not presume to offer her services as nurse. As a matter of fact, she considered this quite unnecessary, for she felt sure that he was either suffering the customary after-effects of a visit to the city or else that he lacked the moral courage to undertake an explanation of his hurried flight from the ranch. In either event she was glad he kept to his room.

When Austin made his appearance, on the day following his return, his bleared eyes, his puffy, pasty cheeks, his shattered nerves, showed plainly enough how he had spent his time. Although he was jumpy and irritable, he seemed determined by an assumption of high spirits and exaggerated friendliness to avert criticism. Since Alaire spared him all reproaches, his efforts seemed to meet with admirable success. Now Ed's opinion of women was not high, for those with whom he habitually associated were of small intelligence; and, seeing that his wife continued to manifest a complete indifference to his past actions, he decided that his apprehensions had been groundless. If Alaire remembered the Guzman affair at all, or if she had suspected him of complicity in it, time had evidently dulled her suspicions, and he was a little sorry he had taken pains to stay away so long.

Before many days, however, he discovered that this indifference of hers was not assumed, and that in some way or other she had changed. Ed was accustomed, when he returned exhausted from a debauch, to seeing in his wife's eyes a strained misery; he had learned to expect in her bearing a sort of pitying, hopeless resignation. But this time she was not in the least depressed. On the contrary, she appeared happier, fresher, and—youthfuler than he had seen her for a long time. It was mystifying. When, one morning, he overheard her singing in her room, he was shocked. Over this phenomenon he meditated with growing amazement and a faint stir of resentment in his breast, for he lived a self-centered life, considering himself the pivot upon which revolved all the affairs of his little world. To feel that he had lost even the power to make his wife unhappy argued that he had overestimated his importance.

At length, having significantly recovered his health to begin drinking again, he yielded one evening to an alcoholic



"Dream Man!" She murmured.

impulse, and, just as Alaire bade him good night, clumsily sought to force an explanation.

"See here!" he shot at her. "What's the matter with you lately?" He saw that he had startled her, and that she made an effort to collect her wandering thoughts. "You're about as warm and wifely as a stone idol."

"Am I any different to what I have always been?"

"Humph! You haven't been exactly sympathetic of late. Here I come home sick, and you treat me like one of the help. Don't you think I have feelings? Jove! I'm lonesome."

Alaire regarded him speculatively, then shook her head as if in answer to some thought.

In an obvious and somewhat too mellow effort to be friendly, Ed continued: "Don't let's go on like this, Alaire. You blame me for going away so much, but when I'm home I feel like an interloper. You treat me like a cow-thief."

"I'm sorry. I've tried to be everything I should. I'm the interloper."

"Nonsense! If we only got along together as well as we seem to from the outside, it wouldn't be bad at all. But you're too severe. You seem to think a man should be perfect. Well, none of us are, and I'm no worse than the majority. Why, I know lots of fellows who forget themselves and do things they shouldn't, but they don't mean anything by it. They have wives and homes to go to when it's all over. But how are you? You're as glad to see me as if I had smallpox. Maybe we've made a mess of things, but married life isn't what young girls think it is. A wife must learn to give and take."

"I've given. What have I taken?" she asked him in a voice that quivered.

Ed made an impatient gesture. "Oh, don't be so literal! I mean that, since we're man and wife, it's up to you to be a little more—broad-gauge in your views."

"In other words, you want me to ignore your conduct. Is that it? I'm afraid we can't argue that, Ed."

"All right; don't let's try to argue it," he laughed, with what he considered an admirable show of magnanimity. "I hate arguments, anyhow; I'd much rather have a good-night kiss."

But when he stooped over her Alaire held him off and turned her head. "No!" she said.

"You haven't kissed me for—"

"I don't wish to kiss you."

"Don't be silly," he insisted. "Come, now, I want a kiss."

Alaire thrust him back strongly, and he saw that her face had whitened. Oddly enough, her stubbornness angered him out of all reason, and he began a harsh remonstrance. But he halted when she cried:

"Wait! I must tell you something, Ed. It's all over, and has been for a long time. We're going to end it."

"End it?"

"We can't go on living together. Why should we?"

"So? Divorce? Is that it?"

Alaire nodded.

"Well, I'll be d—d!" Ed was dumfounded. "Isn't this rather sudden?" he managed to inquire.

"Oh, no. You've suggested it more than once."

"I thought you didn't believe in divorces—couldn't stomach 'em? What's happened?"

"I have changed my mind."

"Humph! People don't change their minds in a minute," he cried angrily. "Is there some other man?"

Now Ed Austin had no faintest idea that his wife would answer in the affirmative, for he had long ago learned to put implicit confidence in her, and her life had been so open that he could not imagine that it held a double interest. Therefore her reply struck him speechless.

"Yes, Ed," she said quietly. "There is another man."

It was like her not to evade. She had never lied to him.

Ed's mouth opened; his reddened eyes protruded. "Well—" he stammered. "Well!" Then after a moment: "Who is it, the greaser or the cowboy?" He laughed loudly, disagreeably. "It must be one or the other, for you haven't seen any men except them. Another man! Well, you're cool about it."

"I am glad you know the truth."

Muttering to himself, Ed made a short excursion around the room, then paused before his wife with a sneer on his lips. "Did it ever occur to you that I might object?" he demanded.

Alaire eyed him scornfully. "What right have you to object?"

Ed could not restrain a malevolent gleam of curiosity. "Say, who is it? Ain't I entitled to know that much?" As Alaire remained silent, he let his eyes rove over her with a kind of angry appreciation. "You're pretty enough to stampee any man," he admitted. "Yes, and you've got money, too. I'll bet it's the Ranger. Huh! We're tarred with the same stick."

"You don't really believe that," she told him, sharply.

"Why not? You've had enough opportunity. I don't see anything of you. Well, I was a fool to trust you."

Alaire's eyes were very dark and

very bright as she said: "I wonder how I have managed to live with you as long as I have. I knew you were weak, nasty—so I was prepared for something like this. But I never thought you were a downright criminal until—"

"Criminal? Rot!"

"How about that Guzman affair? You can't go much lower, Ed, and you can't keep me here with you."

"I can't keep you, eh?" he growled.

"Well, perhaps not. I suppose you've got enough on me to secure a divorce, but I can air some of your dirty linen. Oh, don't look like that! I mean it! Didn't you spend a night with David Law?" He leered at her unpleasantly, then followed a step as she drew back.

"Don't you touch me!" she cried.

A flush was deepening Ed's purple cheeks; his voice was peculiarly brutal and throaty as he said: "The decree isn't entered yet, and so long as you are Mrs. Austin I have rights. Yes, and I intend to exercise them. You've made me jealous, and—"

He made to encircle her with his arms, and was half successful, but when Alaire felt the heat of his breath in her face, a sick loathing sprang up within her, and, setting her back against the wall, she sent him reeling. Whether she struck him or merely pushed him away, she never knew, for during the instant of their struggle she was blind with indignation and fury. Profiting by her advantage, she dodged past him, fled to her room, and locked herself in.

She heard him muttering profanely; heard him approach her chamber more than once, then retire uncertainly, but she knew him too well to be afraid.

Later that night she wrote two letters—one to Judge Ellsworth, the other to Dave Law.

Jose Sanchez rode to the Morales house feeling some concern over the summons that took him thither. He wondered what could have induced General Longorio to forsake his many important duties in order to make the long trip from Nuevo Pueblo; surely it could be due to no lack of zeal on his (Jose's) part. No! The horsebreaker flattered himself that he had made a very good spy indeed; that he had been Longorio's eyes and ears so far as circumstances permitted. Nor did he feel that he had been lax in making his reports, for through Rosa he had written the general several lengthy letters, and just for good measure these two had conjured up sundry imaginary happenings to prove beyond doubt that Senora Austin was miserably unhappy with her husband, and ready to welcome such a dashing lover as Longorio. Therefore Jose could not for the life of him imagine wherein he had been remiss. Nevertheless, he was uneasy, and he hoped that nothing had occurred to anger his general.

But Longorio, when he arrived at the meeting-place, was not in a bad humor. Having sent Rosa away on some errand, he turned to Jose with a flashing smile, and said:

"Well, my good friend, the time has come."

Now Jose had no faintest idea what the general was talking about, but to be called the good friend of so illustrious a person was flattering. He nodded decisively.

"Yes, beyond doubt," he agreed.

The general laid an affectionate hand upon Jose's shoulder. "The first time I saw you I said: 'There's a boy after my own heart. I shall learn to love that Jose, and I shall put him in the way of his fortune.' Well, I have not changed my mind, and the time is come. You are going to help me and I am going to help you."

Jose Sanchez thrilled with elation from head to foot. This promised to be the greatest day of his life, and he felt that he must be dreaming.

"You haven't tired of Rosa, eh? You still wish to marry her?" Longorio was inquiring.

"Yes. But of course I am a poor man."

"Just so. I shall attend to that. Now we come to the object of my visit. Jose, I proposed to make you rich enough in one day so that you can marry."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Sulphur and Rheumatism.

One of England's most distinguished physicians has just reported a valuable piece of information that he learned from a gossip old lady who was addicted to the habit of giving medical advice to her acquaintances, says the Los Angeles Times. She gave some of this advice to one of the learned physician's patients who was suffering from rheumatism in the hands, suggesting that the patient "put sulphur in her stockings." The patient took the advice and the rheumatism in the hands disappeared; also a silver ornament worn on the patient's wrist turned black.

Smaller Buns.

Mrs. Crimmonbeak—Do you think our baker is intemperate?

Mr. Crimmonbeak—Yes.

"Too bad."

"Well, there is some hope. You know he is cutting down the size of his buns now."

HOME TOWN HELPS

FENCE COMING INTO ITS OWN

Discarded From One End of Country to Other, It is Now Being Revived in Many Suburban Colonies.

The great American fence is coming again into its own.

Time was when every home everywhere gained a sense of seclusion with the aid of post, picket or paling, but in recent years these have been converted into firewood from one end of the country to the other. Suburban development and the broadcasting of the "home beautiful" idea had much to do the evolution.

In nine cases in ten the change was for the better. The fence had deteriorated. From a work of art, in many instances designed by the architect of the home it inclosed, it became a matter of unsightly "pickets," and finally a solid, forbidding, ugly affair of boards, often unrelieved by any effort at decoration whatever.

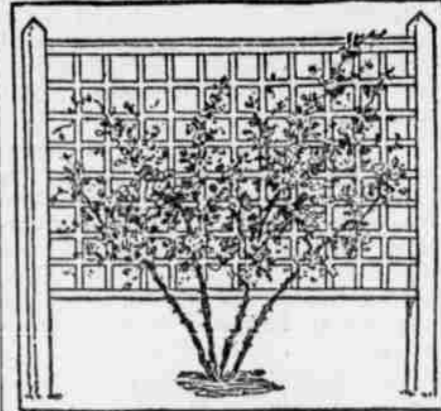
A new interest in the fence, however, is developing. It is manifest in many famous suburban colonies in the North, it has spread westward to wage war with the universal hedge.

The revival grows out of the fact that few appreciated the decorative possibilities of the fence. The white-washed array of pickets, the forbidding hideousness of the vertical rows of knotted boards, the equal unloveliness of iron spikes were not representative of the idea. They were a degeneration born of an era of utilitarianism. They deserved the ban that came to be placed upon them. The fence rejuvenation has nothing to do with either type. And yet the fence that is coming into its own again is not new. It is a revival from the best era of typical American domestic architecture when the justly famous "American Colonial" type was evolved upon English foundations, but with an admixture of originality which still makes the product noteworthy for distinction and beauty.

TRELLIS WORK GARDEN AID

Pergola Requires Taste and Judgment and Easily Becomes a Failure From an Artistic Standpoint.

An all-summer flower garden is at lot 25 by 50 can be planted for \$15—or for much less than that if only an



Rose Trellis to Form a Screen.

nials are used, or perennials raised from seed. The skillful use of lattices and trellis work is of great aid. The pergola requires taste and judgment for effective results, and it easily becomes a failure, from an artistic standpoint.

These are merely suggestions. The subject, discussed in all its phases, would fill an encyclopedia. Some very helpful books have been written for persons interested in flowers, and for a detailed knowledge of the subject, as well as for specific instructions and suggestions, one can with profit turn to these works for guidance and for avoidance of needless mistakes—and the beginner in gardening will make blunders enough, at best.

Suggestions for Home Builders.

Few persons in planning the location of a house take into consideration the necessity of having the rooms so placed as to make them as comfortable as possible. Little heed is paid as to which way the lot should face and on which side of the house certain rooms should be placed. Careful attention to what are considered for the most part as immaterial points in building location and design is very important and results in satisfaction after the house is built.

The lot should face either south or west and whatever else is done the house must suit the ground on which it is built. The dining room is a great factor, worthy of consideration, and it should be so planned as to have south or east exposures. If so located it will be warm in the morning sun and at other meals will be sheltered from the hot sun.

Overplanting of Streets.

There is no sort of tree grown that should be planted on streets as close as 25 feet to each other. It is not desirable, in any case, that a green tunnel should be built or that green walls at street sides are desirable or admired by any. The individuality of a tree is one of its strongest traits or points of character and it should have ample space in which to develop its natural form and outline. Thirty-five feet should be fixed by law as the minimum distance, and any street will, in a few years, be well embellished if one sort of tree is uniformly planted at distances of 75 feet apart.

SOLD SHOTGUN FOR TEN DOLLARS

And Filed on Western Canada Land. Now Worth \$50,000.

Lawrence Bros. of Vera, Saskatchewan, are looked upon as being amongst the most progressive farmers in Western Canada. They have had their "ups-and-downs," and know what it is to be in tight pinches. They persevered, and are now in an excellent financial position. Their story is an interesting one. Coming in from the states they traveled overland from Calgary across the Battle river, the Red Deer river, through the Eagle Hills and on to Battleford. On the way their horses were stolen, but this did not dishearten them. They had some money, with which they bought more horses, and some provisions. When they reached Battleford they had only money enough to pay their ferrage over the Saskatchewan river, and this they had to borrow. It was in 1906 that they filed on homesteads, having to sell a shotgun for ten dollars in order to get sufficient money to do so. Frank Lawrence says:

"Since that time we have acquired altogether a section and a half of land, in addition to renting another three quarters of a section. If we had to sell out now we could probably realize about \$50,000, and have made all this since we came here. We get crops in this district of from 30 to 35 bushels of wheat to the acre and oats from 40 to 80 bushels to the acre. Stock here pays well. We have 1,700 sheep, 70 cattle and 60 horses, of which a number are registered Clydes."

Similar successes might be given of the experiences of hundreds of farmers throughout Western Canada, who have done comparatively as well. Why should they not dress well, live well, have comfortable homes, with all modern equipments, electric light, steam heat, pure ventilation, and automobiles. Speaking of automobiles it will be a revelation to the reader to learn that during the first half of 1917, 16,000 automobile licenses were issued in Alberta, twice as many as in the whole of 1916. In Saskatchewan, 21,000 licenses were issued up to the first of May, 1917. In its monthly bulletin for June the Canadian Bank of Commerce makes special reference to this phase and to the general prosperity of the West in the following:

"Generally speaking the western farmer is, in many respects, in a much better position than hitherto to increase his production. Two years of high prices for his products have enabled him, even with a normal crop, to liquidate a substantial proportion of his liabilities and at the same time to buy improved farm machinery. His prosperity is reflected in the demand for building materials, motor cars and other equipment. It is no doubt true that some extravagance is evidenced by the astonishing demand for motor cars, but it must be remembered that many of these cars will make for efficiency on the farm and economize both time and labor."—Advertisement.

On the Casualty List.

A gallant infantry officer who had faced a hundred perils and returned home from furlough without a scratch met with misfortune the first night home, says London Tit-Bits. In the black darkness of a side street he collided with a porter's barrow and sustained a broken arm. The limb healed nicely, but so long as it reposed in a sling the owner was pestered with kind inquiries from admiring friends who were blissfully unaware of the real cause of the injury. The limit was reached one day when he encountered a former business rival, who at once alluded to the now hateful subject: "By Jove, old fellow, I envy you with that eloquent testimony of your prowess. In what action did you come by it?" "Hang it, sir," was the testy reply, "can't you read the blessed war news for yourself?"

CUTICURA KILLS DANDRUFF

The Cause of Dry, Thin and Falling Hair and Does It Quickly—Trial Free.

Anoint spots of dandruff, itching and irritation with Cuticura Ointment. Follow at once by a hot shampoo with Cuticura Soap, if a man, and next morning if a woman. When Dandruff goes the hair comes. Use Cuticura Soap daily for the toilet.

Free sample each by mail with Book. Address postcard, Cuticura, Dept. L, Boston. Sold everywhere.—Adv.

Off Morally.

An old Scottish woman wished to sell a hen to a neighbor.

"Please tell me," the neighbor said, "is she a'togither a guid bird? Has she nae faults, nae faults at all?"

"Aweel, Margot," the other old woman admitted, "she has got one fault. She will lay on the Lord's day."—Boston Evening Transcript.

The ancients believed the world was square—but that was long before political investigation committees were invented.

After the Murine is for Tired Eyes.

Red Eyes—Sore Eyes—Itchy Eyes—Stinging Eyes—Tired Eyes—Blepharitis—Sty—Conjunctivitis—Mucous Discharge—Reddened Eyelids—Sore Eyelids—Treatment for Eyes that feel dry and smart. Give your eyes as much of your favorite Murine as your teeth and with the same regularity. CARE FOR THEM. THE GARGOL BUT NEW EYES! Sold at Drug and Optical Stores or by Mail. Ask Murine Eye Remedy Co., Chicago, for Free Book.