



THE LIGHT OF WESTERN STARS A Romance

by Zane Grey

Illustrations by IRWIN MYERS

CHAPTER XVII—Continued.

Stewart halted again. In the gloom Madeline discerned a log cabin, and beyond it spear-pointed dark trees piercing the sky line.

He helped her down and led her inside, where again he struck a match. Madeline caught a glimpse of a rude fireplace and rough-hewn logs.

Stewart's soft steps sounded outside. His dark form loomed in the door. As he sat down Madeline heard the thump of a gun that he laid beside him on the sill.

Then the stirring memory of the day's adventure, the feeling of the beauty of the night, and a strange, deep-seated, sweetly vague consciousness of happiness portending, were all burned out in hot, pressing pain at the remembrance of Stewart's disgrace in her eyes.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Sheriff of El Cajon.

About the middle of the forenoon of that day Madeline reached the ranch. Her guests had all arrived there late the night before, and wanted only her presence and the assurance of her well-being to consider the last of the camping trip a rare adventure.

Madeline's guests were two days in recovering from the hard ride. On the third day they leisurely began to prepare for departure. This period was doubly trying for Madeline. Her sister and friends were kindly and earnestly persistent in their entreaties that she go back East with them.

wanted to have fixed in mind her future relation to the ranch and the West. When the crucial hour arrived she found that the West had not claimed her yet.

It turned out, however, that there need be no hurry about making the decision. Madeline would have welcomed any excuse to procrastinate; but, as it happened, a letter from Alfred made her departure out of the question for the present.

Madeline went so far, however, as to promise Helen and her friends that she would go East soon, at the very latest by Thanksgiving. With that promise they were reluctantly content to say goodby to the ranch and to her.

Madeline treated the remark with the same merry lightness with which it was received by the others; but after the train had pulled out and she was on her way home she remembered Helen's words and looks with something almost amounting to a shock.

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As days passed Stewart remained at the ranch without his old faithfulness to his work. Madeline was not moved to a kinder frame of mind to see him wandering dejectedly around. It hurt her, and because it hurt her she grew all the harder.

A telegram from Douglas, heralding the coming of Alfred and a minister, put an end to Madeline's brooding, and she shared something of Florence Kingsley's excitement. The cowboys were as eager and gossipy as girls.

Alfred and his minister arrived at the ranch in the big white car. They appeared considerably wind-blown. In fact, the minister was breathless, almost sightless, and certainly hatless.

On the following day Alfred and Florence were married. Florence's sister and several friends from El Cajon were present, besides Madeline, Stillwell, and his men. It was Alfred's express wish that Stewart attend the ceremony.

Madeline was amused when she noticed the painfully suppressed excitement of the cowboys. For them a wedding must have been an unusual and impressive event. She

and disheveled and suffering. Madeline experienced the thrill that might be mentioned of this girl always gave her. It yielded to a hot pang in her breast—that live pain which so shamed her.

The dinner began quietly enough with the cowboys divided between embarrassment and voracious appetites that they evidently feared to indulge. Wine, however, loosened their tongues, and when Stillwell got up to make the speech everybody seemed to expect of him they greeted him with a roar.

Stillwell was now one huge, mountainous smile. He was so happy that he appeared on the verge of tears. He rambled on ecstatically till he came to raise his glass.

"An' now, girls an' boys, let's all drink to the bride an' groom; to their sincere an' lastin' love; to their happiness an' prosperity; to their good health an' long life. Let's drink to the untin' of the East with the West. No man full of red blood an' the real breath of life could resist a Western girl an' a good hoss an' God's free hand—that open country out there. So we claim Al Hammond, an' may we be true to him. An', friends, I think it fittin' that we drink to his sister an' to our hopes. Heah's to the lady we hope to make our Majesty! Heah's to the man who'll come ridin' out of the West, a fine, big-hearted man with a fast hoss an' a strong rope, an' may he win an' hold her! Come, friends, drink!"

A heavy pound of horses' hoofs and a yell outside arrested Stillwell's voice and halted his hand in midair.

Through the open doors and windows of Madeline's chamber burst the sounds of horses stamping to a halt, then harsh speech of men, and a low cry of a woman in pain.

Rapid steps crossed the porch, entered Madeline's room. Nels appeared in the doorway. Madeline was surprised to see that he had not been at the dinner-table. She was disturbed at sight of his face.

"Stewart, you're wanted outdoors," called Nels, bluntly. "Monty, you slope out here with me. You, Nick, an' Stillwell—I reckon the rest of you had better shut the doors an' stay inside."

Nels disappeared. Quick as a cat Monty glided out. Madeline heard his soft, swift steps pass from her room into her office. He had left his guns there. Madeline trembled. She saw Stewart get up quietly and without any change of expression on his dark, sad face leave the patio. Nick Steele followed him. Stillwell dropped his wine-glass. As it broke, shivering the silence, his huge smile vanished. His face set into the old craginess and the red slowly thickened into black. Stillwell went out and closed the door behind him.

Then there was a blank silence. The enjoyment of the moment had been rudely disrupted. Madeline glanced down the lines of brown faces to see the pleasure fade into the old familiar hardness.

"What's wrong?" asked Alfred, rather stupidly. The change of mood had been too rapid for him. Suddenly he awakened, thoroughly aroused at the interruption. "I'm going to see who's butted in here to spoil our dinner," he said, and strode out.

He returned before any one at the table had spoken or moved, and now the dull red of anger mottled his forehead.

"It's the sheriff of El Cajon!" he exclaimed, contemptuously. "Pat Hawe with some of his tough dep-

uties come to arrest Gene Stewart. They've got that poor little Mexican girl out there tied on a horse. Confound that sheriff!"

Madeline calmly rose from the table, clutching Florence's retreating hand, and started for the door. The cowboys jumped up. Alfred barred her progress.

"Alfred, I am going out," she said. "No, I guess not," he replied. "That's no place for you. Maybe there'll be a fight. You can do nothing. You must not go."

"Perhaps I can prevent trouble," she replied. As she left the patio she was aware that Alfred, with Florence at his side and the cowboys behind, were starting to follow her. When she got out of her room upon the porch she heard several men in loud, angry discussion. Then, at sight of Bonita helplessly and cruelly bound upon a horse, she

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"Wave, I'll submit to arrest with any fuss," he said, slowly. "If you take the ropes off that girl." "None," replied the sheriff. "She got away from me once. She's hawg-tied now, an' she'll stay hawg-tied."

Madeline thought she saw Stewart give a slight start. But an unaccountable dizziness came over her eyes, at brief intervals obscuring her keen sight.

"All right, let's hurry out of here," said Stewart. "You've made annoyance enough. Ride down to the corral with me. I'll get my horse and go with you."

"Hold on!" yelled Hawe, as Stewart turned away. "Not so fast. Who's doin' this? You'll ride one of my pack-horses, an' you'll go in irons."

"You want to handcuff me?" queried Stewart, with sudden swift start of passion.

"Want to? Haw, haw! Nope, Stewart, that jest my way with horse-thieves, raiders, Greasers, murderers, an' such. See hyar, you Sneed, git off an' put the irons on this man."

The guerrilla called Sneed slid off his horse and began to fumble in his saddle-bags.

"Gene, you ain't goin' to stand fer them handcuffs?" he pleaded.

"Yes," replied the cowboy. "Bill, old friend, I'm an outsider here. There's no call for Miss Hammond and—her brother and Florence to be worried further about me. Their happy day has already been spoiled on my account. I want to get out quick."

"Wal, you might be too d— a considerate of Miss Hammond's sensitive feelin's." There was now no trace of

the courteous, kindly old rancher. He looked harder than stone. "How about my feelin's? I want to know if you're goin' to let this sneakin' coyote, this last gasp of the old run-guzzlin' frontier sheriff, put you in irons an' hawg-tie you an' drive you off to jail?"

"Yes," replied Stewart, steadily.

"Wal, by Gawd! You, Gene Stewart! What's come over you? Why, man, go in the house, an' I'll tend to this feller. Then tomorrow you can ride in an' give yourself up like a gentleman."

"No, I'll go. Thanks, Bill, for the way you and the boys would stick to me. Hurry, Hawe, before my mind changes."

His voice broke at last, betraying the wonderful control he had kept over his passions. As he ceased speaking he seemed suddenly to become spiritless. He dropped his head.

When the man Sneed came forward, jingling the iron fetters, Madeline's blood turned to fire. She would have forgiven Stewart then for lapsing into the kind of cowboy it had been her blind and sickly sentiment to abhor. This was a man's West—a man's game. At that moment, with her blood hot and racing, she would have gloried in the violence which she had so deplored; she would have welcomed the action that had characterized Stewart's treatment of Don Carlos; she had in her the sudden dawning temper of a woman who had been assimilating the life and nature around her and who would not have turned her eyes away from a harsh and bloody deed.

But Stewart held forth his hands to be manacled. Then Madeline heard her own voice burst out in a ringing, imperious "Wait!"

Sneed dropped the manacles. Stewart's face took on a chalky whiteness. Hawe, in a slow, stupid embarrassment beyond his control, removed his sombrero in a respect that seemed wrenched from him.

"Mr. Hawe, I can prove to you that Stewart was not concerned in any way whatever with the crime for which you want to arrest him."

The sheriff's stare underwent a blinking change. He coughed, stammered, and tried to speak. Manifestly, he had been thrown completely off his balance. Astonishment slowly merged into discomfiture.

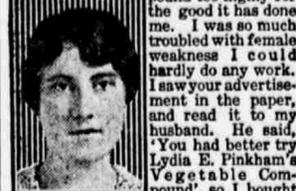
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Similar Woods Differ in Tests. Osage orange and black locust are much alike in structure, strength, durability and color, although the former usually has more of a golden brownish tinge. These two woods can readily be distinguished by the fact that osage orange gives off a yellowish color if wrapped in a wet rag or placed on a soaked blotter, while black locust gives off practically no color under the same conditions.

COULD HARDLY DO ANY WORK

Since Taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound This Woman Feels So Well

Keeseville, N. Y.—"I cannot praise Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound too highly for the good it has done me. I was so much troubled with female weakness I could hardly do any work."



I saw your advertisement in the paper, and read it to my husband. He said, 'You'd better try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound,' so I bought six bottles, and by taking it I am not troubled as I was. I am gaining strength and getting fleshy. My female troubles have vanished and I never felt so well. The Liver Pills are the best I ever took. If you think my letter will encourage other sufferers you have my permission to use it as an advertisement."

—Mrs. SARAH BLAISE, Box 177, Keeseville, N. Y.

Doing the housework for the average American family is some task, and many women lose their health in so doing. If you, as a housewife, are troubled with backache, irregularities, are easily tired out and irritable, or have other disagreeable ailments caused by some weakness, give Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a trial. Let it help you.

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WHY TAKE LAXATIVES?

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Pills and salts give temporary relief from constipation only at the expense of permanent injury, says an eminent medical authority.

Science has found a newer, better way—a means as simple as Nature itself.

In perfect health a natural lubricant keeps the food waste soft and moving. But when constipation exists this natural lubricant is not sufficient. Doctors prescribe Nujol because it acts like this natural lubricant and thus secures regular bowel movements by Nature's own method—lubrication.

As Nujol is not a medicine or laxative, it cannot gripe and, like pure water, it is harmless and pleasant.

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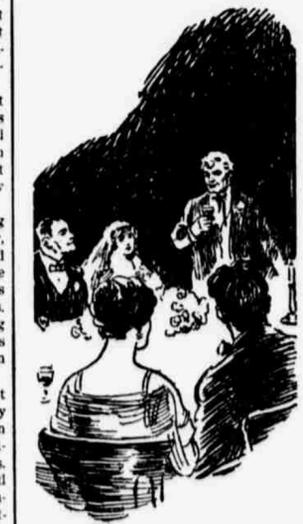
Army Cooks Must Be Clean. The new army cook for British soldiers may not go on duty without being shaved; he is not permitted to smoke in the mess hall, and must have clean hands and finger-nails.

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He Was So Happy That He Appeared on the Verge of Tears.

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