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MCCALL'S

JULY
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TEN
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Featuring

GALLI-CURCI on HUNTING HUSBANDS

PARADISE POACHERS by BEATRICE GRIMSHAW and

YOUTH CALLS IT FREEDOM by LAURA SPENCER PORTOR

MRS HARRY CUMINGS
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SCHENECTADY N Y
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STAIRS of SAND

By Zane Grey

ILLUSTRATED BY DANIEL CONTENT

WITH this installment ends the story of Ruth Larey's heart—its conflict with evil men, and its healing by the love and devotion of two desert men—and its final tempering into a noble and enduring fiber by the harsh, yet beneficent rays of the desert sun.

GUERD LAREY was gone; the post was in charge of freighters, as Dabb had mysteriously disappeared; Merryvale had taken up quarters under a dense low-branched mesquite that flourished across the pond below Ruth's door; and from the porch Ruth could see with naked eye the rugged upheaved rocks and cliffs that marked Adam's new hiding place.

How different this morning! The deceitful old desert



The day . . . was an ominous one for Ruth

was in gentle mood. The sun was not white, the sky not copper, the waste of ground not so ghastly. Birds and rabbits visited the pond. Ruth embraced something sweet and blinding, and hugged it to her. This day held much for her, and though she yearned for the starlight and Adam, she wished there were double the intervening hours, so that she could give them to a profound analysis of her perplexing self.

Her thoughts veered suddenly to a tragic, horrible inspiration. It took shuddering hold of her heart and mind.

Alone in her room, with door barred and window darkened, she had courage to voice the insidious thought. She could kill Guerd Larey! The recognition by her consciousness of this inspiration threw her into tumultuous passion, that blinded her and held her in thrall one sickening appalling moment, before she fell prostrate before the temptation. It was irresistible. It was Justice. It was Fate. It would save Adam from staining his hands with the blood of a beloved and prodigal brother.

She lay on the bed, realizing the enormity of her decision, marveling at the tigerish leap of her instinct, bewildered at the revelation of her nature. Here it was stalking from ambush—the raw elemental force of the desert.

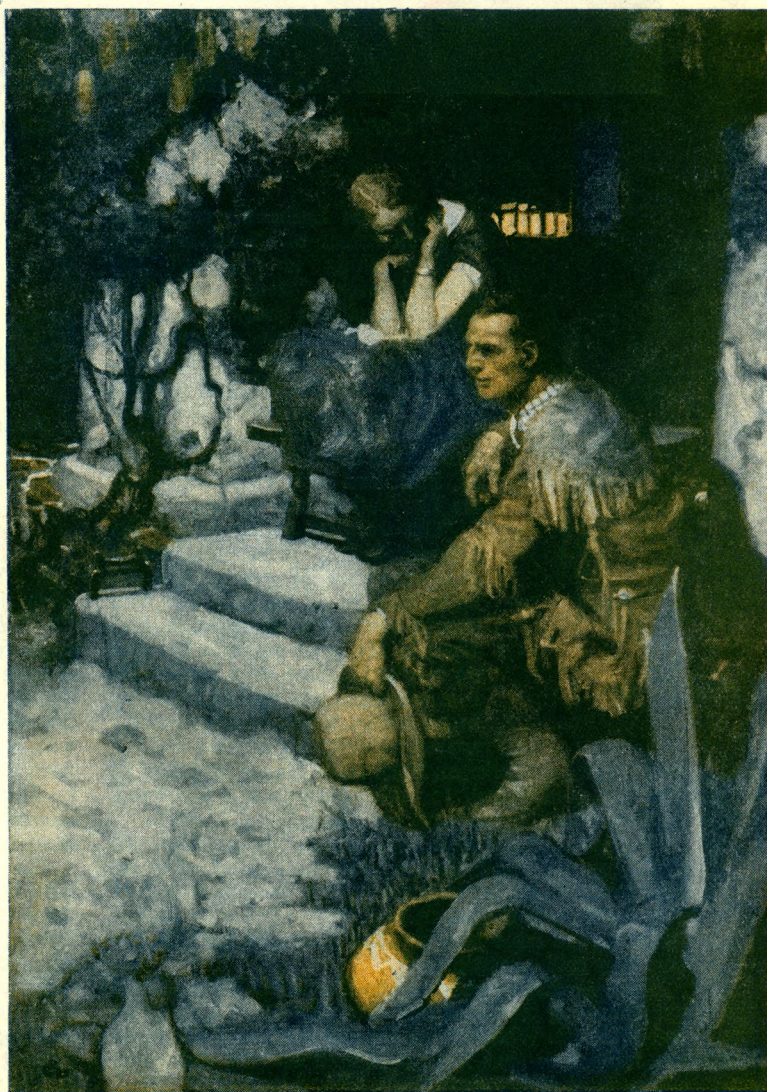
If Larey sought her again, to blind her and break her, to make of her a fallen despicable creature, she would kill him. The decision had all the heat of desert sun and the power of the wind and the ghastliness of the naked wasteland. It shook her as if a superhuman hand had gathered her up and shaken her. And then it left her in strange somber peace. If the worst came to the worst she knew in her deepest, most secret soul how to meet it, to save Adam and herself.

But her peace was short-lived. With her

mind settled ruthlessly, it had flung at her the mighty question, "Why?" Why would she stoop to a deed of blood, so foreign to her breeding, and the gentleness that had once been hers? The answer was Love. It was desert love, and Ruth suddenly fell prey to a paroxysm more riotous and violent than that in which she had received the inspiration of murder.

The room, the house could not hold her. She could not breathe there. She must flee to the desert, to the boundless open and the illimitable air and the infinite sun. But once outside, flying up the path, without limp or twinge now, the thought of Adam restrained her. She remembered that it would not be fair to him to take such risk. Instead, then, she threw herself on the sand under the drooping *palo verde*, and there, with her rapt gaze enveloping half the circle of horizon, she looked through the veils of heat, the white glare, the purple haze, through the silver sand dunes and the dim ranges, through all the vastness and terror and beauty of the desert into the mystery of her own heart.

Ruth had loved Adam at Santa Ysabel, with a strange dreamy girlish reverence; she had cherished that for long. When Adam had first met her in the canyon with Stone there had come again the perplexing attraction she had felt in other men, and then afterward what she took for love; and on the way home from Yuma, with her hold on his arm, with the consciousness of what it had dealt in defense of her honor and life, with the sand storm bellowing the menace of this desert hell, she had come to the first real honest love of her life. But that had been an immeasurable nothing to this white scorching flame, this noonday bursting molten fire of the sun.



A world of love reflected in her eyes



"Still the same sweet old wild-cat," he returned mockingly

Physically, she was part of all she looked at—these terrible elements of nature that had transformed and transfixed her. Spiritually, they had given to her, all the tremendous, inexplicable incentives to a woman's love and passion.

She went back in retrospect to her vain wild weaknesses for this and that man. How slight, how shallow, how selfish those pale little gleams! She had stooped lower than flirtations. She had lent her beauty, her hands, her lips, her lying tongue to the winning of men. Unconscious? Only steps in her development? Simply the mind-wanderings of a woman, drawn by attractions she had no knowledge of? She had been vile. She should have

perished in her self-contempt.

How lightly and with what gratification she had trodden the broad and easy path toward destruction. She saw herself from a great height and looked down with withering scorn, with infinite pity, at the creature she had been. Not once nor twice, but many times had the desert tested her, always to find her ready for the sin of Eve. She had not known it then; she had held aloof, at the end, as in the affair with Stone; but that had only been due to the maddening variations of her temperament. Only accident had saved her in those long-past, apparently trivial affairs. When womanhood stripped away her girlish illusions, and she had met Stone, to work a stronger and more perilous charm on him, only God, using Adam Wansfell as his instrument, could have saved her.

Ruth confessed it. She burned into her soul the brand of what she had been, of what she had escaped. Her mother's prayer to Wansfell now clarified. She had been born with beauty of form, of face, of eyes; and with their deadlier parallel—the longing—the passionate need to love and be loved. She saw it all, and abased her spirit in humility and gratitude. She lay there on the sand, propped against the *palo verde*, gazing out at the transfiguration of the desert she had hated, marvelling at this evidence of her changed soul, and at the freedom which had come like a lightning flash out of the heavens.

Just yet she dared not surrender to the thought of her love, to the intimate and terrific sweetness of it, to the deluge that must sweep away all before it. She must make forever hers the truth of herself, of the fate that could no longer be miserable and could never have a tragic end. She understood Adam's love. He was all love. He loved every creature on the desert, the beasts of men, even this illegitimate brother with all his malignance and corrupt maturity. That explained Wansfell, the Wanderer. The same supreme force that had moulded her stairs of sand had fashioned the boy Adam Larey into the man Wansfell.

Out of the boundlessness of her woman's heart, that vessel of perennial and eternal fertility, she must give to the desert that had saved him, made him give good for evil, give in place of the hate that had been a cancer in her breast, love—love, for its ghastliness, its mutability, its cruelty and its eternal beauty, its driving iron to the God-like in man.

RUTH saw Adam every night, and one day, when the heat was tempered by a rain-storm in the north, Merryvale took her out to Adam's hidden camp in the rock fastnesses. It was the wildest and weirdest place Ruth ever visited. A cataclysm in bygone ages had riven and scattered the stone crust of the earth; and the subsequent weathering had worn short canyons deep between splintered cliffs.

Here, in the shade of an overhanging rock, with the magnificence and immensity of the desert filling her eyes, Ruth told Adam all that she had been. She was merciless to herself. She confessed the littlest and meanest of her motives. She bared her soul. No enemy of hers could ever have sought less favor for her than she sought for herself.

Then quite simply, without sentiment, or surrender to emotion, she told Adam of the gradual change which [Turn to page 68]



His first great adventure!

*So small, so inexperienced,
he tackles solid food*

What a series of fresh encounters—a baby's first two years! New habits to form, new lessons to learn. But his most exciting task is learning to handle a grown-up diet.

It's a time of special care for mothers—when little digestions are struggling manfully to adapt themselves to this change. Then the first solid food must fill three requirements:

First, it must supply the elements essential for growth and health. Second, it must be so simple in form that a baby's stomach, recently graduated from milk alone, can handle it. And third, it must be guarded against hot weather taint.

For 31 years physicians have been advising mothers to use a particular

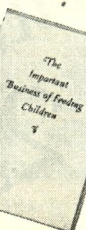
food they consider ideal as the first solid food for babies. Cream of Wheat. Here are three of their reasons:

1. It is rich in energy. And you, who live with a baby, know how much of that he uses up.
2. Cream of Wheat's simple, granular form has none of the harsh, indigestible part of the grain, to irritate his delicate digestive tract.
3. Cream of Wheat is always clean and uniform in quality—protected by a triple-wrapped-and-sealed box.

For safety for your baby, for serenity for yourself, start now, during the summer months, to give him Cream of Wheat. Order Cream of Wheat from your grocer or send coupon below for generous free sample.

Cream of Wheat Company, Minneapolis, Minn. In Canada made by Cream of Wheat Company, Winnipeg.

FREE—Sample box of Cream of Wheat and new, enlarged edition of "The Important Business of Feeding Children"—a booklet of information on correct diet for children from infancy through high school. Just mail coupon to Cream of Wheat Company, Dept. G-19, Minneapolis, Minn.



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GOLDEN STAR OF CAROLINA

[Continued from page 66]

without speaking, lost in the sweet dream that memory had brought to him. Then he went on. "Months afterwards news came to the Gap. The *Shannon Lass* dashed out of Queens-town harbor before the foxy-faced attorney could do anything to stop Peter Spillane. But the lawyer cabled to the American lawyers, and they started all sorts of processes against Peter. They said he had married her against her will and without the consent of her relatives, although the girl didn't know she had a relative when Spillane found her on the island. They said she was under age, and they finished up by saying that Peter Spillane was a scoundrel who wished to get the millions of dollars that would come to his wife.

"At every port *The Shannon Lass* entered there were detectives waiting to serve Peter with papers. For the relatives of the girl had tons of money, and you can harry the life out of a saint if you have money. But at Havana Peter stuffed the papers down the throat of a process server who came aboard his ship, and he dropped the fellow overboard as *The Shannon Lass* was making for the open sea. And at another port he put two private policemen into a big porter barrel and towed them astern till they were nearly drowned.

"It was a Kenmare man who sailed with Peter Spillane that brought the strange story of the end of the great chase. A story that many people doubted. I believe it myself for I knew Peter and his bride. This Kenmare man said that the *Shannon Lass* was chased out of a port of Mexico by a

steamer hired by the relatives of the girl. Chased out into the Gulf. All night he said they sailed by little islands around which the blue seas played. And behind them the lights of the steamer ploughing after them. Peter Spillane and his wife stood on the deck watching the little islands and the frolicking sea.

"Presently Peter Spillane called his first and second mates and all the men around him. 'Take *The Shannon Lass* to port and sell her between you,' he said, 'and say nothing of us to anyone. We are going to the sea that loves us.'

"When he said that he waved them away, and after a little while they heard a splash and they saw the two of them swimming off in the direction of the little islands. They watched the two heads till they disappeared in the night. Peter and his bride had gone back to the sea, because the blood of the *rooms* was in both of them as Red John of the Foxholes said. For the blind fish in St. Finian's Well had leaped again from the water when Golden Star had been taken there by her husband."

My father rose to his feet. "The sea loves those that love the sea," he said quietly. "That Peter Spillane and his wife reached some sweet island I am certain. She and he were kin to the great waters. One woman only have I loved since I grew to be a man, but when I was a gossoon of twelve I was the slave of another who called me *Shamussen beug* with a voice of honey."

He spoke softly as if forgetful of those about him, as if he were still hearing the voice of honey and seeing the woman with the gray-green eyes who belonged to the sea.

STAIRS OF SAND

[Continued from page 32]

had come over her, from his arrival at Lost Lake to the last day in Yuma.

Here she gave way to the agitation that would not be denied; nevertheless she went on with her confession. Then when it came to exposing the uttermost depths of her heart, she faltered and whispered, and at last gasped out the confession of her love.

Blind and spent then, she was snatched to Adam's breast and crushed there, and kissed with a savage abandon that once she had dared to dream of.

At sunset she was again with Merryvale, out on the red desert, returning home, with her body seemingly as light as thistledown, her feet like wings, her mind full of Adam's words of love, and wisdom for her future conduct.

THE next day Guerd Larey came back to Lost Lake with a string of freighters, stage coaches, covered wagons, the van of the railroad workers.

A new era set in for Lost Lake, and it was one that Ruth both welcomed and deplored. Tents and shacks and houses went up as if by magic. The increase of population went on, and it was good, Ruth thought. But she hated the rough element, and the hilarity of the night revelers.

The day that Hunt went back to the post, once more to work with Larey, was an ominous one for Ruth. He had spared her, perhaps gladly, any confidences regarding his renewed relations with Larey. The shrewd Merryvale, growing more brooding and watchful every day, shook his head distrustfully. Ruth concluded he had more on his mind than worry. When she asked him point blank if he was confiding wholly

in her, the answer was not to her liking, not that it intimidated any immediate trouble for her, but that it roused her to wonder if there was any dark growing project in Merryvale's mind.

RUTH always awoke these days at a late hour, and at the low ebb of her vitality, caused by the enervating influence of the Summer heat. And this morning there was the weight of the preceding night's morbid visitations.

Opening her door Ruth faced the white daylight, and her first sight, as always, rested upon the far-stepping silver sand dunes. Her second was suddenly attracted to a group of men at the gate.

She called her grandfather. He did not answer. Ruth knocked at his door, opened it and entered. He was not there, and he had not slept in the bed.

In an instant Ruth was stung palpitantly alive. Catastrophe had fallen, like the lightning-flash of the desert. She did not need to see Merryvale come somberly and haltingly up the path.

"Ruth, somethin' turrible—has happened," he said in husky tone.

"Grandpa!" she cried.

"Yes . . . An' shore I hate to tell you, Ruth. But you must bear up . . . He's daid!"

Ruth's legs gave way under her and she fell into a chair. For several moments she could not find her voice.

"Dead!" she whispered, at last. . . . "Poor grandad! . . . He has been ailing lately. And I did so little . . . Oh, I—I can't realize . . . Was he ill, Merryvale? Was it one of his old

[Continued on page 70]

Careful boy!—it's spread thick—that Heinz Peanut Butter. Moist and creamy. And what a flavor. All those little Spanish peanuts—all those big Virginia nuts—that's what gives it that wonderful taste—rich and sweet and yummy for all the folks who like peanut butter with a fresh roasted flavor.



There's always a lot of satisfaction in working out a way to make something better.

We've always found it so . . . Recently, after ten years of experimenting, we discovered a special way of making Peanut Butter so that it would have no oil on top.

And *that* means a Peanut Butter that is sure to stay moist and creamy and easy to spread until the very last morsel is used.

We patented the process, of course, and made it exclusive with Heinz . . . So now *all* the flavor of the choice, fresh-roasted nuts remains in the butter.

With every one of the 57 Varieties, the name Heinz has come to mean Flavor, due to methods exclusive with Heinz. With an established reputation such as ours, can you wonder that we regard it as our most precious possession.

HEINZ

Peanut Butter

No oil on top

H. J. HEINZ COMPANY · PITTSBURGH, PA.

STAIRS OF SAND

[Continued from page 68]

attacks of acute indigestion?"

"No, Ruth, I wish to Gawd it had been. But he was killed—murdered!" "Adam! get Adam!" she exclaimed, wildly.

"Wall, first off I thought of gettin' Adam heah," he said, deliberating. "But that wouldn't do no good, 'cept to comfort you, an' it might lead to harm. I'm goin' to find out who killed Hunt. If I know these yellow dawgs, that won't be no hard matter."

"Merryvale, I'm shocked to my heart . . . But—but I'll stand it. Do the best you can for—for him. And let me know if there's anything I can do."

"Ruth, I'm goin' down to the post. It suits me to be the first to tell Guerd Larey about this," replied Merryvale, with a queer intent flash of eyes. He turned away with bent wagging head and made his way to the post.

RUTH, in going over her grandfather's books and papers after the funeral, was astonished at the proof of the large sums of money he had from time to time advanced Larey.

She made a mental reservation that she would have something to say to Larey when he presented the claims, which he would do sooner or later. Ruth likewise mastered the complicated bookkeeping of her grandfather in regard to the sale of water. Here another surprise awaited her. Hunt owned the only supply of water at Lost Lake, that was to say, the only spring, the fine flow of water called Indian Wells. The post had paid nothing for months. The stage coach company had paid up to the first of the month. The freighters were also in arrears. Both the post and the freighting, so far as Lost Lake was concerned, were under the supervision of Larey and Hunt—according to the papers available.

Ruth did not see fit to make any changes in Hunt's way of conducting business, except to demand prompt payment from the post and freight company. She sent Merryvale with the bill, rather puzzled at the expression on his face as he left her. Upon his return he looked as black as a thunder cloud.

"Ruth, I busted right into the post where Larey was drinkin' with some men," declared Merryvale. "You should have seen his look when I handed him the envelope. Why, his hands jest trembled. Ruth, that villain shore loves you . . . Wal, he read the bill, turned red as a beet, an' cussed somethin' awful. Then he hawhawed like a gleeful devil."

"But what did he say?" queried Ruth, curiously, as Merryvale ended.

"Wat, that's what riled me," rejoined Merryvale. "He tore up the bill, an' right before those men, strangers to me an' a hard-lookin' crew, he said: 'Tell my wife she'll soon be usin' her precious water to bathe my feet!'"

Ruth felt blank for an instant, and then, as her blood boiled, she restrained the outburst that flashed so swiftly to her lips and sat silently thinking.

TWO days of work and bustle around the house, with a woman's pleasure and satisfaction in fixing up new quarters for her comfort, passed swiftly, while Ruth gave but scant time to worry. Merryvale took up quarters in the little room that had been Ruth's.

"Reckon I'm gettin' old enough, to sleep under a roof," he remarked. "My days on the desert are about spent."

On the morning of the third day Merryvale absented himself until

nearly noon, and when he returned, one look at him made Ruth's heart sink.

"Ruth, I hate to be a black buzzard soarin' around," he complained, almost coldly. "But I can't keep all the bad news to myself."

"Let me share it," she replied, bravely.

"Wal, I've been nosin' around an' carryin' a bottle to more'n one greaser an' Injun. An' I've got results. I've loosened the tongue of a greaser, an' found out enough to verify my suspicions. Larey was no doubt responsible for the murder of your grandfather. It can't never be laid at his door, because the half-breeds who committed the crime came from Yuma, an' went back there. Neither fire nor whip could make this greaser tell their names. But I know enough. When I have more time I'll explain in detail how I've worked all this out."

"It doesn't shock me. It doesn't surprise me," replied Ruth, through tight, cold lips.

"Wal, heah's some news that will," he went on, as if driven. "There's a bunch of hombres, riders from across the Arizona line, scourin' the desert for Wansfell."

"Merryvale!" cried Ruth, leaping up.

"Yes, an' it come straight from Indian Jim, who heard Larey say it."

"Go at once! Warn Adam!"

"Shore, I'm goin' pronto. But Adam's a fox an' leaves few tracks. You remember the soft sand an' the hard rock we crossed to go to his camp. Wal, he can't be tracked. An' that canyon is the best hidin' place I ever seen. So I'm not worryin' about them findin' him yet."

"Find him—tell him I said—come!" burst out Ruth, wildly.

Merryvale wheeled down the path. And the moment he was out of sight Ruth bit her lips to keep from screaming for him to come back. What was it that had happened? The lull before the storm had ended. The vague misgivings—the strange dream, the random intentions, the intelligent reasonings, all had their answer.

Meanwhile she could only wait.

The hours lengthened. Sunset and Merryvale did not come! Night and Adam failed her! She waited until a late hour, pacing the porch, and lastly her room, darkened and barred. She slept but little, and the voices of the desert haunted her.

The gray casement, dawn, and the sunrise! Wide-eyed she waited, and drove herself to those ministrations her physical being demanded. She saw her cheeks grow wan and thin, her eyes darkened to bottomless gulfs.

She waited. It was one of the unbearable days—torrid with heat, ghastly with its white wraiths, destroying to flesh, maddening to mind. She drank water copiously, yet could not allay her thirst. She waited. Yet there were moments which broke the strain.

What the day foreshadowed came at last. Quick ringing footsteps of a man who brooked no opposition to his will!

Ruth's door was open. She had halted by the table. She had hidden something in a drawer. With a hand that had no tremor she opened it part way.

"Pedro, set my bags here." Guerd Larey's resonant voice! Ruth heard the thud of heavy articles being deposited upon the porch. An amazed query tried to wedge into her mind. It was dispelled by a shadow at the door.

[Continued on page 72]



THE FOUNTAIN WAY
With chocolate syrup on
hand, many cool, delicious
drinks are swiftly made.

Your
favorite
iced
fountain
drink
at home

*swiftly made, rich,
creamy, cooling*

THINK of a long cool frosted drink of foaming chocolate! With ice clinking! With a creamy richness that is food and a sparkling flavor that is pure delight!

The simple secret lies in making up in advance a supply of this syrup—then blending it with cool fresh milk—just as they do at your favorite fountain.

To make syrup: Stir over direct heat $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Baker's Cocoa and 1 cup of cold water. Stir in $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of sugar and a dash of salt; dissolve. Boil 3 minutes. Add 2 teaspoonfuls vanilla. Then pour in a glass jar. Seal it and keep it in the ice chest.

With this syrup, you can whisk together, on a moment's notice, many fountain favorites—chocolate

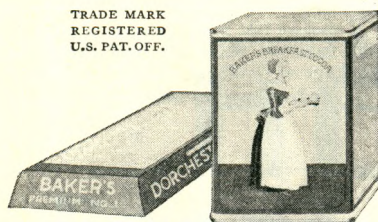
mint fizz, chocolate sodas, chocolate mochas, frosted chocolates—all rich in the chocolate flavor that you have always preferred. And now they will taste better than ever, for they will be made in your own immaculate kitchen from the finest cocoa and other ingredients that you know are pure.

A new leaflet, just out, gives six delightful drinks—six ways to be as hospitable as the day is hot—all simple to make with this syrup base. Ask your grocer today for a copy of this leaflet, "Your Favorite Fountain Drinks."

For a trial supply of Baker's Cocoa (more than enough to make a pint of syrup) with this new recipe leaflet included, just mail us 10c in stamps with the coupon below.

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Baker's Unsweetened Chocolate (Premium No. 1) in the familiar blue wrapper with yellow label, is universally popular for all chocolate cooking—used wherever the recipe says "Chocolate!"

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I am enclosing 10 cents for a generous trial package of Baker's Cocoa, and the syrup recipe leaflet.

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STAIRS OF SAND

[Continued from page 70]

Larey rapped. Ruth did not move so much as a flicker of an eyelash. She was close to the table. One movement of hand! The heat of the room swirled around her, entered her veins.

"Howdy, Ruth," he said, coolly preparing to drink from his canteen. "I've fetched up my things to stay."

His insolent effrontery seemed more than Ruth could bear. It whirled her to face him, her eyes blazing.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"Still the same sweet old wildcat," he returned mockingly. "Well, it suits me. Spit, scratch, bite, fight! I'll like it . . . but you're pale, Ruth, a trifle thin. If it wasn't for your eyes!"

"You thief! You greaser bandit! . . . You murderer!"

"Ruth, you always had a wicked tongue. It used to bother me. But you can't phase me now."

"I know what you've done, Guerd Larey," she said hotly. "You had my grandfather made away with—to further your greed. Your loathsome lust! . . . Oh, you unspeakable monster!"

He laughed at her, though the olive tan of his face began to whiten.

"Now you're like your old self. You lovely piece of flesh! Your purple blazing eyes! Your swelling breasts! . . . I almost remember I loved you once."

"Loved!—You?—Why, you never loved even your mother—or brother, did you?" she flung at him.

That strangely pierced his degenerate armor. He stared at her, wondering, for a second, aghast.

"By God, I never did," he retorted, with bitter brevity.

"Let me out of here," cried Ruth, fearing to trust herself longer. The word brother had unnerved her. This man was Adam's brother. Could she not escape—surrender everything—flee from him and the madness of vengeance, as if from a pestilence?

"If you run I'll drag you back," he rasped out, with first show of passion. "Once I begged for your love. On my knees I begged. You could have made me a better man. But now I don't want your love, your surrender. I want you to fight like the cat you are. I want to beat you, violate you . . . I'll make you cringe and crawl—you white statue of ice."

"Ice? Statue? . . . You should have asked Stone," she taunted him.

"Curse you!" he glared at her. "Fling that in my face, will you? . . . You hussy! You cheat! . . . I should have killed that fool. But I thought you were only playing with him."

"I was, Guerd," she returned, with mockery. She had found the vulnerable place in his hard hide. Jealousy had always been his weakness. "I played with Stone, as with all the others—until Wansfell came."

Larey's flesh quivered spasmodically. His green eyes took a lurid sheen. He slid into the room, back against the wall.

"Wansfell? That desert rat! . . . You—you—"

"He is the most wonderful man in all the world," she cried, and her voice rang with the sincerity of her feeling.

"But Wansfell—that wandering tramp! That desert hermit madman! They tell me he is old, gray, like a bald eagle."

"He is younger than you. And Oh! indeed he is an eagle! And I love him!"

Larey's face was distorted and purple, and his breath whistled. "Woman!" he burst out, hoarsely. "Listen. You were his slave, then. Well, laugh

now, vixen, for I have had him shot!" The man was terrific in his sincerity, in an agony that was half fiendish joy.

"Yes, by Heaven!" he continued, in husky exultation. "I had your Wansfell shot. My men have been on his trail three days. I had paid them beforehand. So they were off to cross the border . . . And he was your lover? Wansfell, the Wanderer!"

Ruth swept close to him, to look into the writhing soul of him, to pierce him at the last, mortally, beyond recall.

"My lover. Yes. And he was more . . . Your brother!"

"Liar! Shut up, or I'll—"

"Do you remember Margarita Aralanes? Do you remember the wheel on the sandy bank, where you stole that Mexican girl from Adam? Do you remember why Adam fought you in that gambling-hall at Picacho? Do you remember who put out Collishaw's eye?"

Larey rallied from that swift volley, but white to the lips, he eyed her in awe, and something of horror.

"A trick to add to his name," he replied, doggedly. "Wansfell had heard that story, no doubt, and he has filled your mind with it. But you can't make me swallow it."

"Oh, can't I though?"

"No, you white fiend. No! . . . Make that wandering lover of yours my brother—who starved on the desert eighteen years ago? . . . No, Adam Larey is dead."

"Wansfell was Adam Larey!" she cried, with such triumphant exultance that he flamed anew.

"Proof! or I'll choke you quiet," he thundered.

"Guerd Larey, you bore Adam an inhuman hate. You hated your mother. From childhood you nursed your implacable jealousy. You tortured Adam with his mother's shame."

Larey's rolling eyes fixed upon this skeleton ghost of the past. His jaw dropped. His face changed convulsively, turned livid, and set in appalling expectancy.

"You dog! Dog! Dog!"

Larey screamed as one whose flesh had sheathed a naked blade.

Ruth pulled open the table-drawer and snatched out the gun. As she swept it round Larey bounded like a cat, struck up her hand just at the flash and report. Then he seized her arm and wrung it, sending the weapon flying. Violently he swung her away from him against the couch, where she sank. With baleful eyes riveted on her, with his hair like mane of a beast, he moved to kick the door shut.

DURING his search for Adam in the canyon, Merryvale had run into an ambush of bandits hired by Larey to kill Wansfell. While he was returning their fire Adam had joined him. Their fire depleted the ranks of the bandits and during an interval, they had managed to elude their foes, but it had necessitated a long detour and it was not until morning that they were making fast pace back to Lost Lake and Ruth.

His endeavor to keep pace with Adam, coupled with the stress of his emotions, well-nigh exhausted him. His heart warned him that it was being taxed far beyond its limit. But he would not retard Adam and he would have dropped dead in his tracks rather than miss seeing Guerd Larey and Wansfell come face to face.

Adam led Merryvale round to the

[Continued on page 75]

STAIRS OF SAND

[Continued from page 72]

back of the post, to the entrance of Ruth's yard above the house and when they reached the porch, Adam paused at some sound within the house. Then he knocked on Ruth's door.

Suddenly the next door swiftly opened inward and Guerd Larey filled the aperture. Bloody marks marred the pallor of spent passion on his face. His jaw hung down, quivering. His rolling dilating eyes set black upon Adam. His thin white attire was dishevelled and stained.

In one lunge Adam shoved him back into the room, so powerfully that he staggered clear to the back wall, crashing against it.

The room was in disorder. Table and contents had been overturned. Merryvale's panic-stricken gaze swept over to the couch, where Ruth lay white as death.

"Ruth!" cried Adam, in a tortured voice.

"Adam?" she whispered, faintly, and tried to rise.

Even in that terrible moment Wansfell did not forget the rousing Larey, for he made no move toward Ruth.

"Yes. I am here," he said, with what seemed an unnatural, unholy calm.

His compelling voice lifted her. Straining she half raised herself on her arms. Her hair fell like a golden mass. How lovely, how terribly tragic her face! The great eyes, expanding, shining like purple leaping flames, set with awful accusation upon Larey.

"Kill him! Kill him!" she breathed too low for Merryvale's strained ears. It was a command, supreme in agony, from a terrible hate. Then, fainting, she fell back on the couch.

Guerd's dry lips framed words that did not sound clearly.

"Wansfell, the Wanderer!"

He was quivering from head to foot.

"No, Guerd. I am your brother, Adam Larey," returned Adam, in tones that had no life.

Larey leaned closer as he stepped. All that was stress and strain about him magnified. He peered out with intense scrutiny into Adam's eyes—close—closer, until with a wondering, terrifying cry he straightened.

"So help me . . . Adam! . . . Mama's little goody boy! . . . curse your soul—I know you!"

He halted, towering, beautiful, beginning to sway and choke over passion too terrible for human strength.

"You love—this woman, Ruth Virey," he panted. "Oh, I know . . . you couldn't help yourself. And she loves you—loves you—loves you, curse her . . . I took her for a hussy—a plaything—a twining white-throated fool . . . But she was pure. My jealous black heart could not see it . . ."

Larey pointed with left hand that seemed rigid yet had an exquisitely slight and rapid tremor.

"Look at her now!" went on Larey. "I have killed her soul! This woman who loves you! . . . Your wandering, knightly, Christ-like code has failed you here!"

Merryvale's tortured acumen read the intent behind Larey's denunciation. He shrilled a warning. Larey's right arm swept out with a glinting gun. Adam leaped like a panther. His hand caught the rising arm. The gun exploded. Then Adam's mighty frame wrestled into terrific motion. He swung Larey off his feet. There was a rending sound, a cracking of bones.

The gun flew at Merryvale's feet. He snatched it up.

Adam catapulted Larey against the wall with sudden thud. But Larey did not fall. His arm hung limp, dripping

blood, but he appeared not to be conscious of it.

Merryvale had existed for this, prolonged his life for it. Raising the gun he held, he shot Larey—once—twice—through the heart.

THEY laid Ruth on the little bed in the room that had been hers.

Adam knelt, still mute, no longer rigid. Merryvale flew to fetch water. It was he who bathed Ruth's still white face, and called to her, hoarsely, hopelessly, until his voice failed.

But she was not dead. The sad pale eyelids moved, languidly opened. Staring black her eyes, through which she came back to consciousness.

She tried to lift her hand. She gazed at Adam, at Merryvale, around the room.

"Guerd!" she whispered.

"He's daid!"

"Oh, God! . . . Adam, I made you kill him . . . your brother . . . After all my love—my vows!—Oh, my stairs of sand! I climbed—only to fall—only to fall!"

"Ruth, Guerd's blood is not upon my hands," said Adam, solemnly. "I meant to kill him. I would have done so . . . But I did not."

"Ruth, I couldn't stand it," interposed Merryvale, huskily. "I wanted more than hope of Heaven—to see Adam break his bones—an' crack his neck . . . But when the time came I couldn't let him do it . . . So I shot Larey myself."

Then these two shaken men knelt at her bedside. Merryvale thought he saw a change that was not physical, though a shade seemed strangely to pass away from her face.

"Ruth, it is hard enough," said Adam, his voice gathering strength. "But Merryvale spared me this deed—fear of which has made your life and mine a hell of contending fires. It is over . . . Now let me think of you."

"I!—but Adam—I can only die," she wailed.

"Hush! Have I been blessed by God with your love—only to lose you? No!"

"Guerd Larey could not die before—telling you—what—"

"He'd killed your soul, he said. But Ruth, that was only a madman's jealousy. That was my brother's curse. Your soul is God's and love's."

"But do you love me—now?"

"More, my darling. More a thousand times."

"But could I make you happy?"

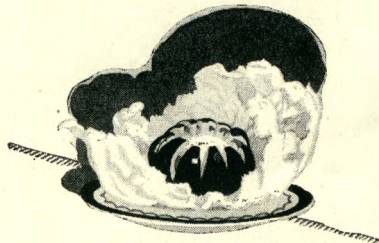
"Ruth, all that has made life significant for me is embodied in you. Your heritage of discontent, your weakness for men, your love, your fight—your climb—you toiled up your stairs of sand on steps of your dead self—and you reached the heights. I would love you the same if you had not. But think of my faith in you and the splendor of my happiness to know it was justified. I love you with all the passion and strength that the desert has given me. But the joy of that is little compared with my joy in your victory over yourself. I think your mother must know."

Ruth did not—could not answer, but her eyes spoke her unutterable love. Adam lifted her in his arms and carried her outdoors.

The mood of the desert was changing. The white wracks of dust had settled. Nature had ended her harsh audit for that day. The sun had lost its torrid heat. Mystical, beautiful, illusive, beckoning, the dunes of sand stepped up to the infinitude of blue. And a brooding haunting silence settled over the wasteland.

[THE END]

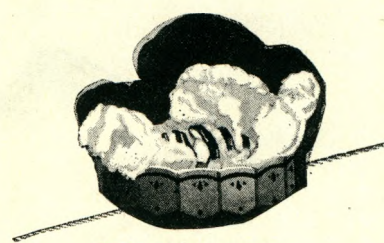
crisp summer salads with a tang



ROSE SALAD
It even looks cool

Cut 6 peeled tomatoes almost through in petal-like sections; season with salt. Blend 2 teaspoons minced onion, 3 tablespoons minced celery, 3 tablespoons Premier Salad Dressing. Fill tomato centers with this mixture. Serve on chilled lettuce with Premier Salad Dressing.

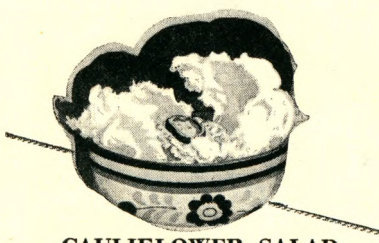
Page 24—An Aladdin's Lamp at Mealtimes.



MELON SALAD
Simple and refreshing

Chill thoroughly 3 cups diced melon, ½ cup Premier Salad Dressing and lettuce or romaine. Lightly mix the Premier Salad Dressing and the melon. Serve in a salad bowl lined with crisp lettuce. Garnish with strips of pimiento or chopped parsley.

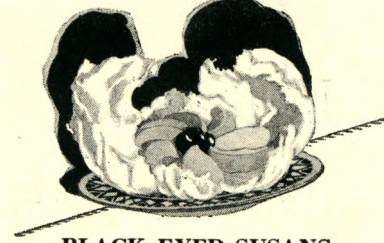
Page 30—An Aladdin's Lamp at Mealtimes.



CAULIFLOWER SALAD
Main dish for luncheon

Break cooked cauliflower into small pieces. Mix ¼ cup Premier Salad Dressing and ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon paprika, 1 tablespoon chopped chives or onion tops. Mix lightly with cauliflower and let stand for 1 hour.

Page 25—An Aladdin's Lamp at Mealtimes.



BLACK EYED SUSANS
A colorful fruit salad

Slice 4 peaches and arrange like daisy petals on four beds of chilled lettuce. Chop and blend with Premier Salad Dressing 8 pitted dates and 8 almonds. Pat into four balls for centers of daisies. Serve with Premier Salad Dressing.

Page 31—An Aladdin's Lamp at Mealtimes.

Premier SALAD DRESSING

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who have carried this movement forward to its present status, in spite of fearful opposition, personal abuse and hard names? I really think so." "Oh," smiled Mary, "if abuse is all that is needed to earn the Presidency I think you have earned part of the price already." Mr. Lincoln was amused. What an ambitious little wife he had! He shook his head, there was no chance. Why force himself? But Mary's inherited instinct from her Indian-fighting ancestors was fired at the prospect of battle, and battle was chance. Why not take the chance! There was everything to gain and nothing to lose. "I admit," said her husband, "that I am ambitious and would like to be President, but there is no such good luck in store for me as the Presidency of these United States." "Oh," cried Mary, "how you underrate yourself!" But, with a knowing little smile, she added, "You are the only person in the world who does. You often quote Burns, 'Oh, wad some power the giftee gie to see yoursel as ithers see you'," she paraphrased.

Mr. Lincoln persisted, however, in his modest estimate of himself. "I must in all candor say I do not think myself fit for the Presidency." Mary laughed at him for thinking himself "Not fit." "You've no equal in the United States," she declared. She really thought he had no equal in the world.

Politics became more engrossing to Mr. Lincoln and more and more in Mary's heart grew the triumphant conviction of his strength. On February 21, 1860, Lincoln made the famous Cooper Institute speech in New York that electrified his party. Two months later, in April, at Springfield, it was *Resolved* by his fellow citizens that "Abraham Lincoln is our first choice for President of the United States. We deem ourselves honored to be permitted to testify our personal knowledge in everyday life as friend and neighbors of his inestimable worth as a private citizen, his faithful and able discharge of every public trust committed to his care, and the extraordinary gifts and brilliant attainments which have not only made his name a household word in the Prairie State but also made him the proud peer of the ablest jurists, the wisest statesman, and the most eloquent orator in the Union."

Letters now came in a stream, some from totally unexpected quarters. Mary with quickened pulses realized what it meant. "Fit or not," she exclaimed, "you are in the field." Then with lowered voice solemn with prophecy, she declared, "You will be President of the United States." Her husband smilingly shook his head. Of course he did not attach any importance to this prophecy, which was the expression of Mary's unbounded love and ambition for him, and yet, it was strange how often Mary could see far into the political future—strange and unexpected things did happen—perhaps—Mr. Lincoln was passively ambitious; Mary, keen for battle on the front line, feared no defeat in this conflict, had no thought that her man might, even with flying colors, go down in defeat.

The State convention met at Decatur, May 9 and 10, 1860, and with wild enthusiasm unanimously declared for Lincoln as President. On May 16, the Republican Convention was formally opened in Chicago. The balloting was a strain. Illinois men thought they had a hundred votes. Counting they found they had 102. Pennsylvania had fifty and one-half votes; Chase, forty-

MARY, WIFE OF LINCOLN

[Continued from page 125]

nine; Greeley's men, forty-eight, McLean, Pennsylvania's second choice, twelve. It was for Pennsylvania to say whether Seward was to be defeated. The Pennsylvania delegation moved that on the second ballot Pennsylvania's vote be cast solidly for Lincoln. When Pennsylvania's name was called amid a profound silence the multitude in the wigwam heard the answer, "Pennsylvania casts her fifty-two votes for Abraham Lincoln." The third ballot Lincoln was distancing Seward—only two and a half more votes and Lincoln would have the nomination, there was an instant of breathless silence, and the chairman of the Ohio delegation springing up on his chair cried, "I rise to change four votes from Mr. Chase to Mr. Lincoln."

The scene which followed baffles description. Men wept and sobbed on each others' shoulders, they threw hats, handkerchiefs and canes in the air. It seemed as though they could not cease their expressions of joy, the tension had been so great and had lasted so long that these outbursts gave relief to pent up anxiety. Mr. Lincoln and Mary all this time were in Springfield. They were feeling the tension and strain even more than their political friends in Chicago. Mr. Lincoln was restless and

spent the weary waiting of this week drifting between the telegraph office and home, for Mary was anxious for every scrap of news. Mr. Lincoln was not as hopeful of the result as Mary.

"Well," he said wearily, "I guess I'll go back to practicing law." "Why, of course," said Mary soothingly. "President Lincoln will return to Springfield and his law office in a few years, but he and Mrs. President are going to travel a little bit before they settle down to a quiet humdrum life."

Friday morning both Mr. Lincoln and Mary had dark rings of fatigue and sleeplessness beneath their eyes, the suspense was almost unbearable, even their voices were strained and sounded unnatural as they tried to speak calmly and reassuringly to each other. Mr. Lincoln went to his office, but soon joined the excited throng around the telegraph office. His nomination came over the wire, then the balloting. The strain was too great, he would not wait. Remembering a commission Mary had given him that morning he started across the square and was standing in the door of the shop when a shout went up from the group in front of the telegraph office. "Lincoln is nominated!" He was surrounded in an instant by an exultant crowd of half hysterical friends bent on shaking his hand and shouting congratulations. The happy excitement of his friends was instantly reflected in Mr. Lincoln's beaming

countenance, but realizing in a moment what it all meant his face became grave and thoughtful. He knew how serious was the crises through which the country was passing and how great a responsibility the next President would have to assume.

"My friends," he said, "I am glad to receive your congratulations, and as there is a little woman on Eighth Street who will be glad to hear the news, you must excuse me until I inform her." He turned to Mary for encouragement and for the triumphant love he knew he would find in her eyes. It does not take a very vivid imagination to picture their meeting; Lincoln proud of his wife and that he had realized her faith in his star, and Mary, her heart singing with joy over the honor that had come to her man—the father of her four sons—her heart nearly bursting with the pride she felt in him. There was not much sleep in Springfield that night for anyone, particularly for Mary. Her knowledge of politics made her share her husband's gravity, but her unbounded confidence in his ability surged in her like a singing sea.

The shouting and singing of campaign songs was sweet music and the glowing, flaming bonfires and parades a beautiful sight, thrilling every nerve with exultation over the triumph of her loved one. Mary was not the only one exultant and happy. Her cousin, Judge Stephen T. Logan, a grave and staid Judge at all other times had gone wild with excitement at Chicago, where he had headed the Convention. He had gone clad in the finest suit he had ever worn and "crowned with a tall, new, shiny, silk hat." When he came back this suit, which he had not taken off since he left Springfield, was wrinkled and dusty and he was wearing a little Scotch cap—the tall silk hat having been beaten into a shapeless wreck over the shoulders of his happy fellow-delegates. (From Rankin's History).

[Continued in
August McCall's]

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