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McCALL'S

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JUNE
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CENTS

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Women and Justice

MRS GRACE L CUTTING
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JUL 13 1928



STAIRS of SAND

*In the mystery of the
desert one woman conquers the
mystery of her own heart*

By Zane Grey

ILLUSTRATED BY DANIEL CONTENT

RUTH, through a ruse on the part of her despised husband, has been kidnapped by Collishaw and young Stone. Merryvale, her old friend, and Wansfell, "the Desert Wanderer," journey to Yuma where they believe she has been taken. Wansfell accosts Collishaw in the *Del Toro* and kills him. With the help of Augustine, Wansfell's Mexican friend, they hunt down Stone and force him to reveal Ruth Larey's place of durance.

THROUGH the door Merryvale saw the light shine down upon Stone, bareheaded and disheveled. He was gasping. Merryvale, in a fury of amaze and glee, bounded into the room. Stone's face was distorted, his tongue protruded. Then Adam released his grip, allowing Stone to drop down to the floor. He choked, and his hands beat wildly at his assailant.

"Don't hit me—Wansfell!" cried Stone, in terror, ceasing to struggle.

"Collishaw is dead," returned Adam.

"My God! . . . Don't kill me, Wansfell!—I have Ruth—in the next room—locked in. I stole her from Collishaw. . . . Let me go—an' I'll take you—to her."

Then Stone, in the iron grip of the stalking Wansfell, led them down the dark areaway that descended into a hall with several doors opening on it. Stone halted at a door, and fumbling in his pocket found a key which he tried to insert in the door lock.

"Let go my arm—Wansfell," he panted. "You paralyze me . . . my hands shake so."

The key dropped to ring musically upon the stone floor.

"Merryvale, pick it up. Open the door," ordered Adam.

A poignant exclamation from inside that door pierced Merryvale, as he bent to find the key.

RUTH seemed to feel herself waking from a dreadful nightmare. Her consciousness returned with heavily lifting eyelids and was attended by dull pain.

She saw faded curtains, bed posts, old plaster walls from which the pink tint had worn, a small barred window. All unfamiliar! This was not her room. Where was she? Still in a hideous dream?

But she was awake. The place had substance, reality, not the vague, distorted outlines of a dream. Ruth raised herself, suddenly conscious of extreme weakness. She lay on the yellow lace coverlet of a high bed in a room she had never seen in her life.

Then successive waves of memory welled up, to overcome her with the flood of incidents that had rushed her to this sad pass.

Stone's confession, that while under the influence of drink he had stolen money from Guerd Larey's office desk; his persistent and abject importunity to her to intercede with Larey in his behalf; her reluctant consent

and foolish walk down the path; the sudden enveloping of her head and shoulders in a blanket, and the violence which stifled her scream and subdued her struggles; her sense of being thrown into a wagon and held there, of being

carried by rapid rolling wheels off into the desert. Then the smothering blanket had been removed. She lay face up to the stars, with Collishaw on one side, Stone on the other. Like a tigress she fought to escape—fought until her strength was spent. Then she lay there panting, with rage giving way to fright. Collishaw could not, or would not keep his hands off her. Her scathing scorn and then her impassioned appeal seemed only to incite him the more; but they affected Stone. He remonstrated with Collishaw, and finally used physical intervention.

That dreadful night wore to gray dawn. The rolling of wheels ceased. She lay with hands bound by a scarf, in the wagon, which had been drawn under an ironwood tree. Hot and still the day came. She slept off and on through the heat, seemingly aware, even in her slumber, of these men, so fiercely at odds over her. Weary interminable hours of fear, of bewildered conjectures, of physical pangs! Then dusk and the lessening heat and the rolling wheels again. She remembered being lifted out of the wagon, carried on into the blackness—then oblivion. And here she had awakened in a strange room, weak and suffering, her white, thin gown soiled, minus sleeves and otherwise torn, her arms showing dark bruises, her slippers gone.

No other conception than that Guerd Larey was the instigator of this plot occurred to Ruth. However, Collishaw and Stone had been influenced by her actual presence, had nothing to do with the idea of the abduction. Suddenly Ruth's clearing mind flashed with the thought that as sure as the sun shone, Adam would come to her rescue. She had not the slightest doubt that he was already on the track of these men. What would he do to them? Wansfell! A shudder ran over her, despite the heat.

Ruth was terror-stricken at the very thought. In that moment she hated her beauty, her body, the poor frail vessel of flesh about which men became mad. No—not Adam! He loved her soul, her suffering, the thing she felt was her innermost self, the womanhood she had all but abased. Her kisses, her embraces that last night, her pleading to take her far away from the ghastly desert, had racked and torn him, but he had stood at the last like a rock. Not until she was free—and never could he free her! Even then the shame of her weakness and her failure burned with Ruth. What must he have thought of her? The same woman's wiles she had used upon Stone! Passionately she repudiated the consciousness.

Suddenly she sat bolt upright, all her thoughts suspended. Had she heard a step outside? Yes—another and another! A knock on the door brought her to consciousness of her captors. Hastily she covered her bare shoulders and arms with the bed coverlet. Then she heard her name called, low but surely. She ran to the door—knocked in reply—whispered. It was Merryvale. He spoke again, told her Adam was in town—they would come to get her. Ruth hardly knew what she was saying. Merryvale had tried the door and could not budge it.

"I can't break down this door. But Adam can," he whispered. "Keep up heart, Ruth."

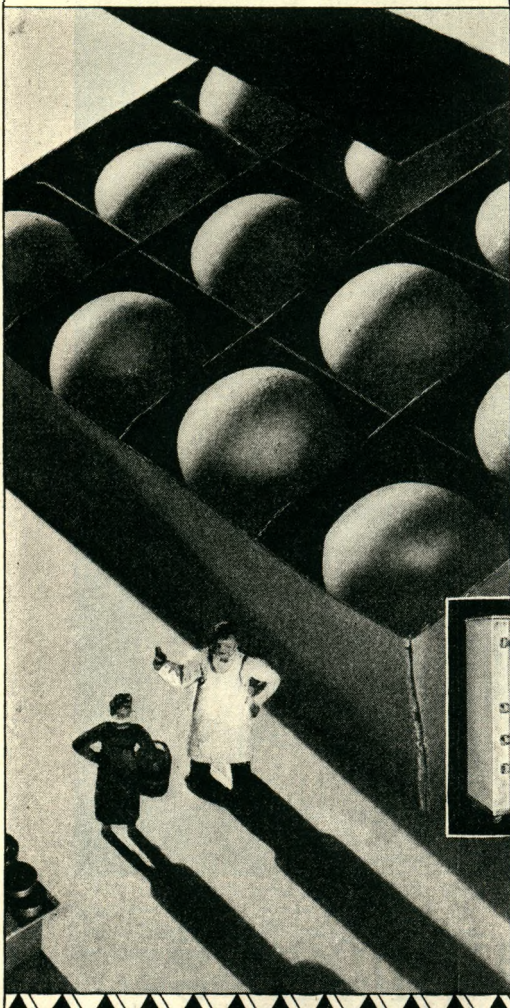
"Hurry—Oh! hurry!" she whispered back. "Any moment he may come."

Merryvale's light footsteps soon ceased. Ruth, with hands pressed over her pounding heart, leaned back against the door. Through the window she saw golden sunset-flushed clouds and blue sky. Adam was in Yuma. Would soon be there! What were doors or walls or chains to him? She prayed that [Turn to page 92]



Out into the night, of gloomy walls and dim lights

"...71, 72, 73, 74, 75... there you are lady, 75 dozen eggs"

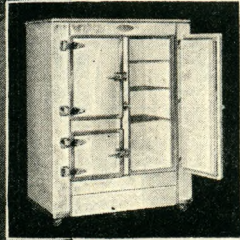


WITHOUT a good refrigerator, a dozen eggs will spoil just as quickly as your year's supply. But there are refrigerators being used today that are failing in their food-saving service. Wasters of ice! Food contaminators! Look at your refrigerator... isn't it time to get a new one... a Gibson?

The Gibson is an ideal place to keep food safe because it is insulated with the finest material known—pure corkboard. It is the insulation that manufacturers of electrical refrigeration units approve.

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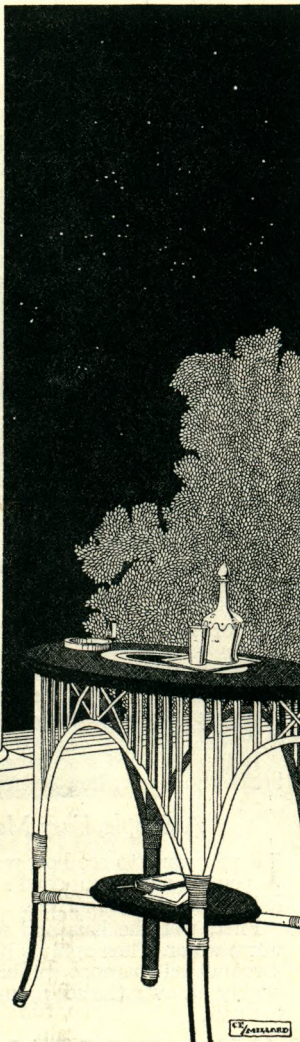
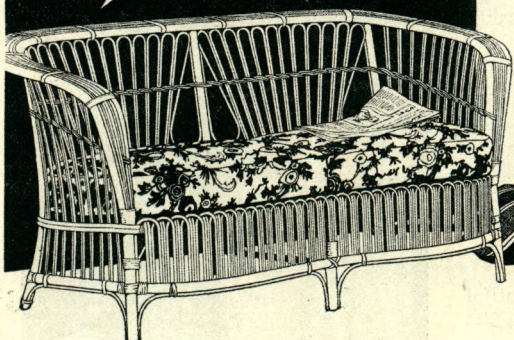
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Send 6 cents to Heywood-Wakefield Company, 209 Washington Street, Boston, Mass., to cover the cost of mailing our helpful book on interior decoration, "Color Furniture in the Home."

STAIRS OF SAND

[Continued from page 28]

there would be no hitch in Merryvale's plan—that they would rescue her before Larey got to Yuma. What vile intention had actuated Larey? To get her away from home—to break her spirit and drag her down—then back to Lost Lake, submissive and lost to all except the life of a squaw! What a madman he was, not to realize that she would kill him and then herself!

A key clicking in the lock interrupted her meditation. A rush of joyous excitement—and some emotion striking deeper—brought her erect, quivering. Merryvale and Adam had contrived to get the key. They were here.

The lock rasped, the handle turned, the door opened. Stone entered. He was pale, determined.

"Oh!" cried Ruth, with a shock of sickening disappointment.

"Say, you must have read my mind," he flashed, his glance running over the curtain which enveloped her. "Come. I'll get you out of here."

"Hal, I'm afraid to trust you." "But you'll be worse off if you raise hell an' spoil my game," he declared, impatiently. "Collishaw is dickerin' right now with Sanchez, and may be here any minute. He's goin' to double cross Larey an' sell you... Oh, don't look that way! These men do these things. Besides if Collishaw an' Sanchez don't make away with you, Larey will be here tonight."

Ruth hesitated. If Adam did not come at once, before Collishaw, she would be in much greater danger than if she went with Stone, whom she felt sure she could manage for a while, at least, or else escape from him. Adam, not finding her at the *Del Toro*, would hunt for her, and the chances of tracking Stone were more favorable than of finding Collishaw. And if Guerd Larey were the first to arrive—Ruth did not allow herself to finish the thought.

"I'll go—with you," she faltered. Swiftly, then, Stone drew her out of the room and locked the door. It was almost dusk. The red afterglow of sunset lingered in the west. Stone took Ruth's arm with no light hand and almost lifting her along, he hurried down the porch stairways to the courtyard. From here he led her into the side street and away from Sanchez's place. They met several people, who apparently took no notice. Stone talked in forced casual tones. They went down a block and turned again, and proceeded to the poorer section of Yuma.

"You said Sanchez, didn't you?" asked Ruth. "Then that was the *Del Toro*?"

"You bet it was, an' no place for a white woman," he returned, suggestively.

"This path hurts my feet," complained Ruth. "I haven't any shoes. Don't go so fast."

Stone slowed down to oblige her, and slightly relaxed his grip on her arm.

A stone bruised her foot and a few steps more and she was not even able to walk. Dizzy and weak, she would have fallen but for his support. Then he carried her along the street, into a gloomy areaway, where, coming to a door, he put her down. Unlocking the door he dragged her into a dark room, where she sank to the floor. There she partially lost consciousness, though she heard Stone moving around and saw the darkness lighten.

Then Stone lifted her into a chair. Ruth recovered presently to see that she had been brought into a large, high-

ceiling apartment, stone-walled and stone-floored. The furniture and the iron-shuttered window indicated that this was the abode of Mexicans. Stone wiped his wet face and breathed heavily while he glared at her. He betrayed no apparent consciousness of her pitiable state. His bold eyes gloated over her bare arms and shoulders, over her dishevelled hair that fell like a shower of gold about her.

"I'm going to take you away from Yuma if we have to walk," he said.

"Suppose you do elude Collishaw and Guerd, and—but that's silly of me. You cannot escape Adam Wansfell," said Ruth.

"Who? That wanderin' desert rat? I tell you I don't care," he retorted, with a sullen passion that showed he hated to be made to think on it.

"You love life as well as anybody." "Ruth Larey, I don't love life or God—or anythin' but you. I'd throw them away—like that—just to possess you one minute."

"But Hal, think—think before it's too late!" she entreated. "You cannot possess me, as you call it. Of course, as I'm unable to lift a hand, you can sink lower than a desert savage and—"

"Guerd Larey means to sink that low," Stone interrupted, with flaming jealousy. "I read his mind."

"Oh, there's no hope to reach you," cried Ruth, despairingly.

"Not that way, Ruth. So you might as well make up your mind to let yourself go."

Suddenly Stone was no longer staring at her. His head was turned to one side, lowered a little, in the attitude of intense listening.

Ruth's tired heart quickened. She heard footsteps, then a knock upon a door, surely another door in this very house—then sharp quick Mexican voices.

Stone cursed under his breath, and leaping up, he guardedly opened the door, which he had forgotten to lock. The voices came distinctly now, somehow different from natural conversation. They must have startled Stone, for he glided out of the room and turning whispered to Ruth: "If you yap it'll go bad with you!" Then he closed and locked the door noiselessly; and his swift, soft footfalls died away.

A door opened, there were sounds of a struggle, then footsteps—louder, coming back—a Mexican voice, shrill, excited, answering deep tones that lifted Ruth's sunken heart! Men had halted outside the door. A key clinked upon the pavement.

"Merryvale, pick it up. Open the door."

The same deep tones! Ruth's voice released itself in a cry.

The lock shot back with a rasp. Violently the door swung in. Then the black doorway seemed filled by a gigantic form. Adam strode in, dragging Stone by one great hand clutched in his shirt. Other men followed, closed the door. Adam gave Stone a fling. He catapulted against the wall and slid down.

Adam knelt before Ruth, bent close to search her face. She could not speak just then, but she met the gray lightning flash of his eyes, and smiled with all the gladness that filled her breast to bursting. He did not speak, but the relaxing of an iron tension spoke more eloquently than words.

Ruth lifted a shaking hand, which he instantly enclosed in his. Merryvale came to her side. "Wal, now lass, brace up. We're heah!"

Adam's emotion seemed too deep

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STAIRS OF SAND

[Continued from page 92]

for smile or word or movement. Yet his look was beautiful and soul-disturbing to Ruth. At last he released her hand and arose.

Then he gazed down at her while he pointed to Stone.

"Why did he fetch you here?"

"He wanted to—to save me from Collishaw," faltered Ruth.

"Did you come here of your own accord, or did he force you?" went on Adam.

"Both. He frightened me into coming. It was a choice of evils."

"Stone," began Adam, in a deadly calm. As he turned away Ruth caught his sleeve to stop him.

"Adam, let him be," she asked, not in any sense entreatingly. "At least he did save me from Collishaw's utter brutality last night, and no doubt today also."

"I don't want your pity, Ruth Larey," declared Stone, flaring up.

Merryvale took a couple of steps in Stone's direction. "Did you hear what I told you about Collishaw?"

"Yes, I did, you old ferret-face. An' I don't give a whoop in hell. I played my game an' lost."

Adam turned once more to Ruth. "It is evident to me that you want Stone let off."

"Adam, I think I am to blame," she said, as unflinchingly she met his stern sad gaze.

"You mean merely because you happened to be at Lost Lake when Stone came. But that's too far-fetched. You are not to blame for being alive. You are not to find yourself guilty because you have wished men to find you fair. That is any woman's right . . . But was not Stone only an instrument in this deal—and Collishaw another?"

Ruth lied, encompassing all the innocence that she could muster.

"Aw, hell, Wansfell," burst out Stone, getting up. "You listen to me if you want the straight of this. Guerd Larey hatched this deal. He'd got a tip from Collishaw about how to fetch his wife to terms. Well, Larey didn't want to figure in it. He had deep schemes at Lost Lake an' he was too smart to queer them. So he sends Collishaw off north as a blind. He got me to fit in with his game. That wasn't hard to do, for I had a game of my own. Dabb was in it, too. I was to steal money from Larey's desk. Then my part was to go to Ruth and beg her on my knees to come down and persuade Larey to let me off, because I was drunk or crazy. I did go and Ruth fell into the trap. I daresay she didn't dislike the idea of trying out her charms an' tricks upon her husband. We went down the path. Collishaw was hidin' with a blanket. He threw it over her head, an' grabbed her up. We ran to the wagon waitin', an' got in. The Mex drove off . . ."

"So far so good for Mr. Larey. But right there his deal ended. Ruth fought that one-eyed devil like the little cat she is. He'd have torn her to pieces but for me. Then when she was beaten, lyin' there white in the moonlight, with her dress nearly torn off, that damned Texan couldn't keep his hands off her. If I'd had a gun I'd sure have bored him. But I hadn't an' I was afraid to snatch at his. I saw that he had double-crossed Larey. The sight of that girl was too much for him, the old buzzard. I cussed him an' begged him an' fought him all night to let Ruth alone. An' so help me heaven, if I never did anythin' good for her before, I did that."

"But my plan was to double-cross Larey myself. I was to get the money I stole. Larey—who thought he was so

slick—believed I could be bought. But I loved the girl an' I meant to fool him an' take her away. An' you can bet your life I'd have done it but for that bead-eyed Collishaw."

Stone's hurried, coarse and impassioned story had the ease and strength of veracity. If it impressed Wansfell he did not evince the slightest sign.

"Stone, you lack a good many things," he said, coldly. "And one is that you can't see ahead. I could crack your neck and think no more of it than to crack a stick by the camp-fire. But this girl asks that I do you no injury. She misled you and that galls her . . . Well, you go your way. But never cross my trail again."

In the silence that ensued Stone made for the door, opened it and passed out. The light flared upon him, dogged and sullen of mien, and then he vanished in the gloom.

"We will go now," said Adam.

Ruth put her bruised feet gingerly to the floor and rose to rest her weight upon them. She flinched, but managed to limp a few steps, when Adam stopped her with an encircling arm.

"I'm afraid I can't walk very well," she said.

"You need not walk"

Adam lifted Ruth in his arms. She wondered at the sphinx-like impassiveness of his face.

"Wal, lass, shore you needn't worry none about Collishaw," spoke up Merryvale, in a voice that held an unfamiliar cold note.

Ruth sagged against Adam. She felt only an exaggeration of her weakness, but she knew what Merryvale meant. What little strength she had left was scarcely enough to resist a stealing faintness. Then her mind seemed vague. She had a sensation of resting laxly in Adam's arms, of being moved out into the night, of gloomy walls and dim lights, of whispering voices.

Again Ruth heard the low hum of Yuma's night life. She was being taken back into the heart of the town. A passageway took form around her. The passageway led into a *patio*. Then they were mounting steps. Adam carried her through dim-lit halls and rooms, at last to let her gently down. Their Mexican guide appeared to be issuing orders. Soft sandled footsteps sounded through the house; the darkness of this room gave place to light. Ruth found herself given into the kindly hands of Senora Augustine and her two daughters.

Ruth sank back, to close her eyes and surrender to the Mexican women. She scarcely felt their ministrations. All within her breast seemed stilled, frozen. It passed, leaving a numb sickness. Slowly the horror faded out of her mind, like a spectre retreating down an empty hall, where mournful winds of darkness blew.

A languor overcame her. She slept.

THE next morning found them on their way to Lost Lake. The stage rolled on and around and upward, at last emerging from the river basin, and the rising dust. The air cleared. And the grand desolate variations of the desert wilderness stood out in the white morning light. Away wandered the red green-bordered ribbon that was the river, at last piercing the dark mountains, so crinkly and bald and rugged. Away spread and rose the gray gravel slopes, fringed with green-spotted gullies, swelling to the level rim of the escarpment.

Ruth suddenly realized that she was not for the moment gazing drearily,

[Continued on page 96]



Home Baked Food is Best!

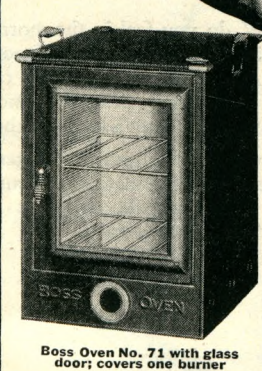
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STAIRS OF SAND

[Continued from page 96]

I always slip back to the other Ruth. Alas, the real contemptible Ruth!"

"If my brother is at Lost Lake now, then we may doubt Stone's story. But if not—"

"Oh, Stone lied!" interrupted Ruth, hurriedly, guiltily conscious of her own falsehood. "He swore he would get even with me. Merryvale heard him. Well, Stone inveigled Collishaw somehow; and each had his own treacherous motive. Stone told me Collishaw tried to sell me to Sanchez."

"How terribly I want to believe that Stone lied about my brother!"

"Adam—that ought to make it easy," faltered Ruth.

"Yes. I will believe until we know surely."

"You will see me tomorrow night, without fail?" entreated Ruth.

He gazed down upon her with the strange look that always troubled her soul.

"Ruth, what will become of us if you make it so that I'll have to see you all the time?"

"It would be very wonderful for me," she returned, ashamed yet unabashed. "But I never can make it so."

"Take care," he warned, but with pathos. "Even the loneliest of desert eagles has a mate once in its life."

"Wouldn't you be happy, too—if such a wonderful thing came true?" she asked, softly.

"Happy if I killed my brother!" he ejaculated, sternly.

"My God!—You—you—I didn't mean that!—Oh, I can't see why—" cried Ruth, breaking off in anguish.

"Ruth, you can't see. That's the trouble. But let me tell you. The noblest way you can be true to your mother's prayer—and save me, is to keep me from killing Guerd."

"Adam, I would sacrifice my life for that," she answered passionately.

"Then fight it out. I don't mean alone. I'll help all I can. For let me swear this to you. If Guerd ever finds out I am Adam Larey—that I am your friend and protector—that I love you, he will be a fiend. Nothing on earth or in heaven could hold him in his hate . . . Then I'd be driven to kill him!"

"Adam, I promise you, I'll fight it out, and never forget," replied Ruth. "But I'm only a woman—unstable as the winds—weak as water up to this very hour . . . I must know you are near me."

"I shall be," he replied, in earnest relief.

"You will be quite near?" asked Ruth, eagerly.

"It is scarce two miles."

"Oh. That big jumble of rocks to the east of Lost Lake?"

"Yes."

Merryvale approached them at this juncture.

Adam put a brawny hand on his shoulder.

"It's a hard place for me," he said, with emotion. "I am used to facing the desert, and men and events. But I am powerless here . . . The trust I give you is this. Never let Ruth out of your sight. I mean when she is not in the house. She can't be cooped up all the time. Never let her out of your sight. And if any man lays a hand on her—shoot him!"

"Wal, pard, I savvy. An' I shore have a hankerin' for my job," drawled Merryvale.

Adam loomed over Ruth then, with smile and touch that thrilled her. "Adios, l'luvia d'oro!"

"Ah, not gold. You should say 'showers of trouble' . . . and I should say, 'adios, grande senor!'"

At that she turned into the stage coach and Adam returned to his desert.

[Concluded in JULY McCALL'S]

THE PRINCESS MARRIAGEABLE

[Continued from page 27]

physicians and nurses in charge, but most of the care of the babies is undertaken by Swedish girls."

From the Princess' chatter I began to realize what a happy childhood the three Princesses and their young brother must have had in their lovely home in Stockholm. It is situated in the midst of a private park, on an elevation with a wonderful view over a part of the Harbor, and thus is adaptable both for a Summer and a Winter home.

Before the end of our audience I ventured to say that I would like so much to have a photograph, and asked where I might procure one that her highness would approve.

Princess Maerta was very sweet about it. "I think I have some upstairs," she said, and instead of ringing for a servant she quite simply went to fetch them herself.

Her photograph can give only an inadequate conception of Princess Maerta's intelligence and charm, yet it upholds to some degree the assertion that this Royal Princess is a lovely example of all that is so splendid in beautiful, modern and highly civilized Sweden.

The Infanta of Spain

It was a formal audience at which I was invited to meet the Infanta Beatrice of Spain. I walked through state-drawing rooms, past Generals and Admirals in gorgeous dress uniforms ablaze with decorations, to a smaller salon, where I bent low over her

Majesty's hand. The English Queen of Spain seems to grow more graceful and youthful every year, and her daughter, the Infanta Beatrice, has grown into one of the loveliest girls imaginable.

Everyone who comes in contact with her Royal Highness is struck with her personality, making one feel she is destined to occupy some position in the world. Like all Royal children she has been taught to overcome all shyness and to feel at home with anyone they may meet. But the Infanta Beatrice has a particular flair for remembering people—she remembers their faces, their names and all about them.

A simple life the Infanta has led from childhood up; breakfast in her rooms at 8:30, a half hour of games and gymnastics in which the King often joins them, out of doors under a trained director. Studies in the morning under private teachers and directors, an English governess one day and a French the next. Luncheon at 1:30, then the afternoon more or less free to go out with the Queen, attend races or other informal functions, take dancing lessons or play tennis. After tea at 5:30, studies again until 7:30 or so, when all the Royal children spend a highly prized hour with their parents. Supper at 8:30 and bed by nine.

And the result is that the elder daughter of the King and Queen of Spain is now ready to carry on the noble traditions of her house and to occupy her own important position in the world.

Now!~Lighten Your Skin

4 or 5 Shades



WITHOUT the use of HARMFUL "Bleaches"!

A Totally NEW Way That Brings What Every Woman Has Always Wanted: A Method of Lightening the Skin Without Slightest Danger of Irritation!

MODERN beauty science has perfected a way that acts almost overnight; yet that's wholly without the harsh bleaching agents of old-time "bleaches."

A way that not only bleaches the skin to ivory whiteness, but acts to soothe and soften the skin as well.

A way, thus, that brings the one thing, in home beauty culture, every woman has always wanted—a *proved*, safe way of bleaching the skin.

It also causes freckles, blotches, liver spots and moth patches to disappear. *It eliminates blackheads* almost unbelievably.

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It is the product of a world-famed laboratory whose entire effort is devoted to skin whitening. A laboratory purposely situated in the

Entirely NEW Principles

It acts on entirely new principles. Instead of harshly *bleaching* the skin, it acts to neutralize the elements in the skin that cause skin darkness. And thus meets the exactments of modern beauty science in skin protection.

Old-time bleaches depended for their action on *irritant* ingredients. This new way employs, as its bleaching agent, one of the most potent *healing* agents known.

An agent employed by virtually every doctor in combating skin disorders. And rated as such by the greatest printed authority of scientific research, the United States Pharmacopoeia.

Do you wonder, then, that largely on expert advice, women are flocking to its use?

Results Overnight
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A single application will prove its powers to you. Prove them beyond all doubt or skepticism.

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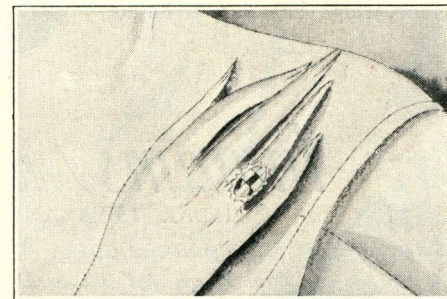
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Bleach Creme



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It is called Golden Peacock Bleach Creme. And is unqualifiedly **GUARANTEED** to bring those results to you, or the purchase price refunded without question.

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wild and haunting in the spirit of the night, something to touch with fire the gypsy blood. As the lovers lingered at their trysting-place, Red Alec caught the girl suddenly to him.

"Come away with me, tonight, M'eudail."*

"No we're going to be married soon, my love, we can wait. I must think of my father," she replied softly.

On the following morning an itinerant packman came out from Arichat and stopped at the LeBlanc farm for dinner. From his wares Marseli bought laces and perfumes to add to her trousseau. After the purchases were completed the packman gave them the gossip of distant parishes, of weddings and betrothments, of births and deaths, of crops and harvests.

Red Alec sitting apart was puffing his pipe when a casual remark suddenly focussed his attention.

"The Judique fleet came into Arichat last night for bait. They're on the way to the banks fer the Winter fishin'."

"Umph, a bad business," snorted Godfrey. "A destroyer of homes, a maker of orphans and widows."

"But it's a man's business, though."

Unconsciously, Red Alec had spoken from his shadowy corner.

At this remark, Old Godfrey glared about. "It's surprised I am to hear ye offerin' opinions like that. A good man stays by his own place. He's a fool who would leave the security o' farmin' fer the foolishness o' fishin'."

"But some cannot help it."

"What!" the word roared.

The grim giant wheeled as though rankest blasphemy had just been uttered.

"Didn't I hear ye say, Red Alec Campbell, that ye were through?"

"Yea."

"Well, I'm givin' my daughter a dower o' half these acres. It's hers and it's yours if you are willing to keep the faith of the soil."

Godfrey LeBlanc rose in sudden fury and strode over toward Marseli. Placing his hand tenderly upon her he muttered half as a threat, half as a prayer:

"No daughter of mine will ever marry a man who goes to sea."

Whilst he stood there in defiance, over his head suspended in strange union rifle and crucifix bearing witness to Acadians ever ready to stand on guard for their own. Red Alec could not sleep that night. The idle rumors of the packman had left him all agog while the whisperings came back again. He sat up in the darkness listening to the heavy breathing of the householder.

"My God!" he burst out while a cold sweat began to gather. "My God!"

In an instant a light foot-step and Marseli stood bending over as she had appeared on that first waking.

"Are you sick, my love?"

"No, only restless."

"And what disturbs you?"

"Thinking o' the Judique fleet down there in Arichat."

"But I thought you hated the sea."

"Yea, when I'm weak. But then when I get stronger the old blood comes back again and something inside here keeps calling, calling."

Suddenly Marseli flung herself upon his bed and buried her face in the coverlet.

To have caused grief to this tender creature was unbearable. "What is it? What is it, M'eudail?"

Still dry sobs racked the pretty one.

"Oh, tell me, tell me, Marseli, what is it?"

Checking her sobs and looking up through agonized eyes

*Gaelic—my darling.

SOIL AND THE SEA

[Continued from page 127]

she burst out, "I really believe that down underneath you love the sea better than me."

"No, no, little one, I love you better than anything else in all the world."

"Then why are you always harking back to the sea?"

"Perhaps it's because the sea loves me. You know the sea will have her own. Poor Louis, who claimed to understand, always used to say that I was one of the loved ones of the sea."

"Well, who do you love most?"

Dark eyes were shining like two stars, a warm breath fanned his cheek.

"Who is it that you love the most?"

"I love you, M'eudail. You only."

Comforted by this protestation Marseli kissed him, whispering, "Tomorrow, love, is our wedding day."

Then she passed out again, the purest, the loveliest, the sweetest visitant that he had ever known. There was a balm in her presence, a soothing in her kiss. But when she had gone disturbing voices once again intruded. In that hour the very peace of this Acadian home became oppressive.

Answering to disturbing voices, he rose, dressed and

passed stealthily out along the eaves and then, sailor-fashion, lowered himself to the ground.

It was a glorious October night with the northern lights shining grandly across the upland ridges.

As true as a homing swallow he took the wood road through unknown country to the open sea, the road up which they had brought him after rescue and which he had shunned since like the plague.

With the packman's words now sounding in his ears he took this course unflinching. For nearly a mile, he ran through dim woodland, then, a breaking in the trees and the salt tang of windy marshes. He did not hesitate, his feet were toward the dykes.

Climbing atop the dyke he raised himself and stood gazing outward. The tide was at the flood and there stretching beneath his feet lay the golden pathway of a moonlit sea, shimmering to dim horizons. This golden pathway for one of the Red Campbells was as the pathway to the end of dreams.

They were to be married that night in the cathedral at Arichat. The bridegroom came into town early. The bride was to follow later with her father.

All day Red Alec had been strangely troubled listening to beguilements of the great seducer. At one moment his mind was haunted by a vision of that moonlit sea stretching out before him like a waiting lover, crying and calling for her own. Something within him was answering to that call, yearning for the hard, sweet kisses as of old.

Then Marseli would appear, the loveliest, the purest, the sweetest, while in the background sounded continually that taunt, "No daughter of mine will ever marry a man who goes to sea."

For hours Red Alec walked the milelong street of Arichat with its poplars, its grassy ways, its air of long ago.

Night came down quietly over the port, lights began to twinkle from a hundred homes and there high from the steeple the angelus was ringing. Red Alec was turning toward the church, when the ship's bell, clear and sweet, sounded the last long call of an outward-bounder.

Instinctively he took the foreshore turning. Around the corner and, gallant over all, the lofty trucks of the *Pass o'Balmaha*, riding to her anchor.

While he still paused, across the harbor there came that siren song that sounds like passion in the veins of roving men, the clank of a windlass pawl and the note of an anchor coming in.

A dory was shoving off. Just as they broke ground he leaped across the quarter.

A voice hailed, blithely. "Hi, Skipper, welcome back."

Unanswering, he shouldered his way imperiously aft and took his accustomed place beside the wheel. "All right, shake out yer heads'ls."

The jib went fluttering up and filled away as the vessel met the first long ocean swell.

High in the cathedral the chimes were sounding for a wedding, sounding for some one who would never come, for down there in the harbor a bridegroom of the sea was passing out to his beloved.

As Marseli in all the loveliness of her bridal dress waited for her lover, Red Alec gazed across the sparkling blue waves of the sea. Forgotten were its dangers and disasters, its treachery was forgiven; again the Skipper was in the grip of the sea: never to be lured from the fascination of its ways.

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