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Code of the West
Zane Grey P 12

John S. Curry. illustration

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Rescuing a Raisin Maid—By Robert V. Ritchie

THE CODE OF THE WEST



XXI

THE next day established in Georgiana's mind an idea of the state of affairs, as they existed then and would not improbably remain for some time to come.

She could not understand Cal Thurman. He talked very little, and seemed anxious to get out of her sight. A brooding, almost somber preoccupation attended him during the little while she saw him. She decided that he knew full well she would not stay there long, and likewise knew why she remained at all. But she could discover in him no signs of remorse. This caused Georgiana surprise and considerable heat. If he had repented she might have thought a little better of him. There did not seem to be any justification in Georgiana's fear that he might have another fit of fury like the one in which he had carried her off. But undoubtedly, as he had shown such a terrible temper, it was in him, and might crop out at any moment. Nevertheless, the day brought relief in the assurance that he would let her severely alone.

Her own part in meeting the present was simple enough. As long as she remained under Cal Thurman's roof and partook of the food he supplied, she must work to earn it. Even if she had not too much pride to accept anything from him, she must work for her own sake. If she sat down to mope over this unfortunate affair, she would brood herself sick. And she knew that for weeks she had almost imperceptibly failed. She knew the meaning of the gentle boil of her blood. It had disappeared for a while, but now it had returned. Georgiana dismissed it from mind. She was not going to be ill. A month of idleness and confinement to her room had dragged her back almost to where she had been upon her arrival at Green Valley. She could not longer be dependent upon her sister. She was thrown upon her own resources, and if she had not strength and courage enough to survive here in the West she would go back East. If she had to die she wanted to do it at home. But this catastrophe, which had just fallen, had roused a latent fire in Georgiana. She was not going to surrender without a fight. Then what had been a willful, thoughtless vanity had changed into another kind of pride.

"They thought I was no good for anything but to mope over boys," she soliloquized darkly. "Everybody except Mary thought bad of me. Cal thinks so now, I'll bet. All because I fooled a little with these moonstruck boneheads! . . . Well, little Georgiana will proceed to fool them in another way."

SO SHE made deliberate plans for the necessary household work and for the manifold improvement that was possible. Then she went to work. Night found her infinitely weary.

Next day, about noon, she had a caller, no other than her father-in-law, Henry Thurman.

"What you-all doin' about heah?" he asked, beaming upon her.

"Cal's building fence at his uncle's, and I'm up to my eyes in work," replied Georgiana.

He tramped around the kitchen, inquiring about everything, and then performed the same office for the living room.

"Wal, some folks aboot the Tonto hollered too soon," he said. "Daughter, I shore figger thet Cal's lucky."

By Zane Grey

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN S. CURRY

"Thank you," murmured Georgiana, warming under his approval. It was a hollow victory, yet somehow it seemed strangely sweet.

"Georgie, what you want for a weddin' present?" he asked with a broad grin. "Reckon thet's why I'm heah. But I ain't said airy word about it."

"It's very good of you. But I don't want anything," replied Georgiana.

"Wal, I reckon you do. Young folks jest startin' a homestead need a lot. Come, daughter, put on yore thinkin' cap."

Suddenly Georgiana remembered her plan for work and improvement of the cabins.

"If I tell you what I'd like will you keep it secret—for a while?" she asked.

"Mum's the word, Georgie."

"I'd like a sewing machine and a lot of dry goods."

"Fer makin' dresses an' sich?" he queried with a knowing smile.

"No, indeed. For making curtains, sheets, pillowcases, tablecloths, towels—oh, a whole lot of things."

"Wal, I'll be dog-goned!" ejaculated Henry Thurman, greatly pleased. "Daughter, I'm shore proud of you. Now you jest write out a list of what you want. I'll send to Ryson. They can phone to Globe an' have it all come on the stage. I'll have it packed up heah pronto. I'll shore do my best to keep anybody from findin' out about it."

WHAT with work and sleep the days passed swiftly for Georgiana, and though they all seemed similar there was a tangible something growing with them. If there was any difference in Cal it was the look of wonder and bewilderment he cast upon her in unguarded moments. Following these would come an expression of acute pain, at which times he would go out abruptly or turn away to hide it.

Georgiana had set herself a task almost beyond her strength. But she had set it and she stuck to it. She even chopped wood and carried water, chores that sometimes became necessary when Cal was away.

Georgiana vowed she would not sink under this pioneer work so new to her. She suffered aches, pains, burns, cuts, bruises, and for days the exhaustion of a frail body. Then when she felt that she had about gone her limit she found her strength increasing. Her appetite increased to an amusing and alarming capacity. The keen cold winter air, clear and sharp, lost its terrors for her. On that sunny south slope the snow melted almost as it fell, and so one of the dreaded features of winter did not keep Georgiana indoors.

During this time Cal had made additions to his homestead. From his Uncle Gard's ranch he had brought chickens, pigs, two cows and a calf; and also loads of sorghum and corn to feed them. Thus the barn and chicken coop and pigpen received tenants, heralding the real beginning of

a rancher's activities. These newcomers did not add to Georgiana's labors, because Cal did all the work of caring for them. Yet, naturally, they somehow increased Georgiana's responsibilities. Just as naturally, too, she and Cal found it impossible, though they were estranged, to keep wholly aloof from each other. It was Cal's homestead; and Georgiana, having undertaken a task, could not withhold interest. At night when Cal came in from his last chores they talked of the simple facts of the day and the needs and probabilities of the morrow. Georgiana gradually forgot her dread.

Georgiana caught herself one day watching a storm hanging over Promontory Point. It struck her suddenly that she had been dreamily absorbed, yet filled with a vague pleasure. Thereafter she found occasional recurrence of this strange preoccupation becoming almost a habit. It amazed her. Laying a trap for herself she learned some thought-provoking truths. She had acquired a keen nose for the fragrant smoke from juniper wood, and the piny tang from the forest and the icy breath of the north wind. The long zig-zaggy Rim, with its golden belt of cliff and its white line of snow and black fringe of trees, had come to absorb many of her moments. The sunsets, when broken clouds massed in the west, could lure her out of the cabin to watch. The lilac haze of the cañons, the purple mantle of the ranges, she watched for, disappointed when they failed at a particular sunset, thrilled when they showed for a few fleeting moments.

MORE remarkable was it to discover that she had grown fond of the calf and the chickens. The pigs no longer disgusted her. And a tiny mouse that had taken possession of the wood box behind the stove, growing tamer and bolder, finally became a pet.

Confronted by these strange facts Georgiana marveled at herself.

"I'm growing dotty. Guess it's loneliness," she sighed, and straightway dispelled contemplation of herself.

One night Cal came in with a troubled face.

"Enoch sent word we were to come down to Green Valley tomorrow," he said. "He an' Mary are goin' to be married."

"Oh—has it been a month since—since —?"

"Reckon it has," replied Cal dryly. "One month tomorrow! Seems like a million years to me. . . . Do you want to go to your sister's weddin'?"

"I'll have to go," replied Georgiana, much perturbed.

"Mary would be hurt. . . . And yes, I—I want to go. Don't you?"

"I reckon not. But I can stand it if you can. All the Thurmans will be there an' lots of other folks. They'll have a chance at us."

"I—I forgot. It will be embarrassing—won't it?"

"Huh! I should think it'll be terrible. That's up to you. If I didn't come Enoch would be sore. But I wouldn't care."

"Yes, you would. Enoch thinks a lot of you, Cal. He'd miss you. Then we couldn't make any good excuses. I'm scared stiff at the thought of facing all that crowd."

"They think we're happily married," said Cal with a hollow laugh.

That stung her. "Your tone implies an unhappy state you feel you don't deserve," she retorted.

"Huh! Are we goin' or not?" he returned.

"Oh, we'll have to go," burst out Georgiana.

"All right. Now it's not my doin', please remember that. An' we better put in some tall figurin' right here. . . . We'll have to ride horses, an' come back home tomorrow night in the dark. That won't be any fun."

"But why?" queried Georgiana.

"You don't seem as bright as you used to be. If we stay all night mother will give us one room—for both of us. Naturally, since we're supposed to be married. An' we can't stay, that's all."

"I—I didn't think," replied Georgiana hurriedly, and she felt the blood hot in her face. "Of course—we must come back."

"That means you must dress to ride," he went on. "It will be cold, but by bundlin' up an' wearin' your boots I reckon you'll be warm enough."

"But, Cal, I can't stand up with Mary—in a riding suit—while she's married," protested Georgiana.

"What do you want to wear?" he queried.

She pondered a moment, and then replied hesitatingly: "My white dress—the one you hated. . . . But I've lengthened it, quite a good deal."

"Huh! I don't care what you wear, but I reckon a longer dress would please my folks."

GEORGIANA maintained silence, conscious of an accelerated pulse and a feeling of pique. So he did not care any more how she looked? She thought that a dangerous remark to make to any woman. Manifestly his love, having nothing to feed upon, had died. How exceedingly constant men were! For an instant the old Georgiana roused to conquest. She could make him love her as wildly as he used to—and more; and there was devil enough left in her to incite her to do it, if he dared to scorn her. But Cal's sad, worn face, his troubled eyes, showing he was trying to forget himself for others, disarmed her rash impulse. Yet a little bitterness rankled in her heart.

"I'll pack your grip on my saddle," he went on. "Now do you want a hunch from me—for your own good?"

She eyed him doubtfully. He seemed so earnest, yet impersonal. This marriage day of her sister's had focused attention upon a situation both Georgiana and Cal had avoided. She saw his sincerity. There might indeed be something he could suggest that would make the ordeal less painful.

"Yes," she replied.

"I'm rememberin' the night you pretended to be hurt in the car—you know, when I brought you out to Green Valley.

You fooled everybody. An' I reckon you're some actress, as Enoch said afterwards. . . . Well, make the same bluff tomorrow. Go to have a good time, an' pretend to be happy, even if you're miserable. You might fool even yourself. For all my folks an' friends will meet you more'n half way."

"Thank you. I'll think it over."

NEXT day Georgiana might have spared herself any worry about riding all the way down to Green Valley along with Cal. All the Gard Thurmans arrived at Cal's cabin, merrily en route to the wedding. And as Cal had timed their arrival he was ready to start. The friendly and kindly greetings Georgiana received from this branch of the Thurman family were all given on horseback.

The day was an unusually fine one for winter, not cold but keen and invigorating, dry under hoof, with white clouds sailing the blue sky and a sun that comfortably warmed.

Georgiana had an auspicious start for this day in which she meant to pretend to be happy. Mrs. Gard Thurman, a woman who showed the hard years of pioneer life yet was sweet and motherly, struck the right chord in her greeting to Georgiana.

"Wal, lass, I'm glad to see you're pickin' up," she said kindly. "You look fine. An' shore them's real roses in your cheeks today!"

It took nearly three hours to reach Green Valley. Georgiana enjoyed it, and tired only toward the very end. The dread of meeting people failed to materialize. Georgiana actually laughed when Tuck Merry strode out into the road, taller and thinner than ever, and showed his pleasure at sight of Ollie Thurman, as well as an unmistakable proprietorship.

"Tuck, this air a bad day to go sweet on a lady," said Henry with his dry chuckle.

It was he who lifted Georgiana off her horse, and he did not neglect to make it an affectionate action. The porch appeared full of people, mostly long, shiny-faced, blue-jeaned riders that Georgiana did not see distinctly. But she saw Mary very clearly, and rushed into her arms.

"Georgie!" exclaimed Mary after that first embrace, holding her at arm's length and gazing upon her with glad eyes. "You look different. Your face is not so thin. I never saw you so—so pretty. Oh, you're getting well!"

Georgiana hugged her. "Old dear, it makes me happy to see you and hear you say that. I—I hadn't thought of my

health. I've worked. . . . Take it from me, you look pretty well yourself. This marriage stuff must be the dope for women."

Georgiana had not worn a party gown for over a month. She was so eager to see how much she really had improved during this period that she put on her white dress in the middle of the afternoon. This was in the seclusion of Mary's room. The effect on Georgiana was mag-

ical. Deep in her secret heart had been an unuttered fear that she was losing her health, and with it youth and beauty. But never before in her life had she looked so well.

MARY was all smiles, praises, kisses, between which she wondered and marveled at Georgiana's improvement. Georgiana was no longer thin and frail. This gown revealed that. Yet it was only half as

revealing as it had been before Georgiana had changed it.

"When they see you tonight they'll forget how you used to look," declared Mary with gratification.

"Cal hated this dress when it was short," observed Georgiana. "I told him I had lengthened it, but I don't think he took much stock in what I said."

"Goodness! Haven't you dressed up since you were married?" asked Mary.

"Not once."

"Well, you'll make up for it tonight."

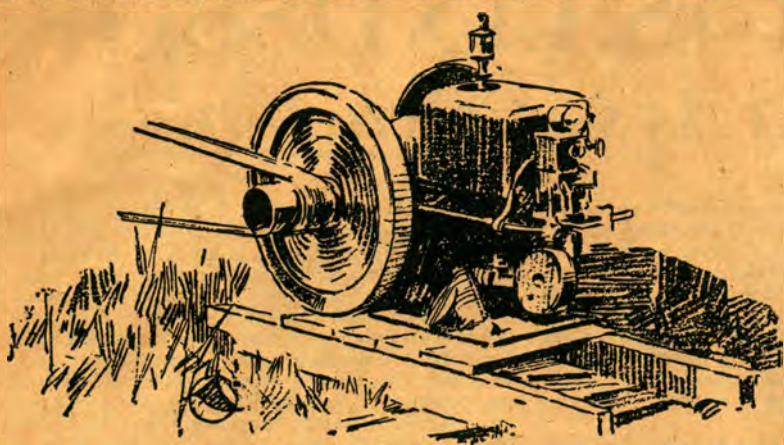
"I think I look pretty spiffy myself," replied Georgiana. "But I've got to hide my hands. Look!"

She spread out the disreputable little members for Mary's inspection. Georgiana had always been proud of her beautiful hands and had cared for them accordingly. But this last month care had gone with pride.

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"I'm Growing Dotty. Guess it's Loneliness," Georgiana Sighed



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The Code of the West

(Continued from Page 13)

"Wife of a homesteader! They look it, I'll tell the world!" exclaimed Georgiana ruefully.

"You've treated them cruelly, but they'll get well," said Mary. "And now, Georgie, help me a little with my dress."

The sisters spent the happiest hour they had ever known together. Georgiana did not have to play a part.

It took only a few moments for Parson Meeker to make Mary the wife of Enoch Thurman. In the Tonto neither long courtship nor ceremony was in favor.

But the congratulating of the bride and groom was a different matter. Georgiana thought the riders would tear Mary and her to pieces. This was their one opportunity and they made the most of it. That hilarious half hour prepared the way for dinner. This was really a feast. All the Thurman women had a share in it. Georgiana sat next to Mary, and on her left was Cal. Actually she had forgotten him until this hour. Whatever were his true feelings he wore a genial manly demeanor that became him in Georgiana's sight.

AFTER dinner came the personal contact with everybody present—the ordeal which Georgiana had so dreaded. Yet how mistaken she had been! Was the thing to dread within herself? She came second only to Mary in the attention of relatives and friends. Strangely Georgiana remembered her earlier training. The ultramodernism had no place here. All was simple, homely, sincere. They rang true. It was not a social gathering. It was the wedding of the chief of their clan. And Georgiana was made to feel something she had never dreamed of—that she counted in the sum of the Thurmans. They all came from fighting Texas stock. If she had been willful, silly, trifling, even vicious, that was as if it had never been. She had given her hand to a Thurman—she was a Thurman. Life was a strong, serious, splendid thing with these Tonto people. Youth was only a preparation. Marriage was a beginning. Before that hour ended Georgiana was a strangely thoughtful, repentant girl.

The big living room was cleared of tables, and old Henry got out his fiddle.

I'm a fiddlin' fool—

An' the last of my boys has gone to school.

They began one of the half-square, half-round, changing-partner dances in which all the young folk and many of the older took part. It seemed to Georgiana that every man and boy on the floor had designs upon her and Mary. How they jigged and swung and romped! The old ranch house shook to its foundations. Never in her life had Georgiana been so whirled and lifted and raced and contended for. She began that dance fresh, excited, in the fun of the hour. She ended it spent, on fire with the life, vitality, intensity of these primitive people. As it chanced Cal had not met her once in the endless changing of that dance.

"Rest now an' cool off," he said to her. "We've got a long ride an' we must be goin' soon."

GEORGIANA was glad to leave the gay company and retire to her sister's room to change the white gown for riding garb. Glad—but for a strange reason! Cal's words had broken a spell. She had forgotten him and herself and the hateful reality. It disturbed her suddenly to discover that an abrupt suggestion of departure from that happy circle had brought disappointment. So Georgiana was soberly glad to leave because she found she was having a good time. This extraordinary fact must be delved into.

She and Cal slipped out the back way, just as if they were the bride and groom. A full moon shone white in the pale sky. The hills were black and lonely. An icy wind blew down from the heights.

They trotted and loped their horses; and in what seemed a short time rode down into the Boyd Thurman clearing. Across the bare field, in the shadow of the pines, stood the little log cabin Georgiana remembered with a shock. She had been married there. Was it only one month ago?

On they sped and came to the best stretch of road, where the ground was free of stones. Cal's horse quickened his gait and Georgiana's was not to be left behind.

Tufts of swinging pine needles reached out from the shadows. Georgiana had one blow which stung so smartly that she did not care for another. She had to see and dodge. The rhythmic beat of hoofs rang through the forest. Black depths of pine thickets, moonlit glades, open white curves of the road crossed by bars of shadows, passed by until at last Cal drew his horse to a walk at the foot of the trail up the hills.

GEORGIANA was in a glow. The cold night wind felt pleasant. She was too excited to realize weariness. But now, since it was safe to let her horse choose the way, she found it possible to think connectedly. That she must think annoyed her. The night was beautiful, the ride wonderful, the wild, lonely Tonto forest strangely productive of thrills. Why must she think and what about?

It came to her then that her month of martyrdom had ended with her sister's marriage. She could leave Cal Thurman's home now and go her way. No longer need she and her vexations and troublesome character, her problems and responsibilities, bring peril to Mary's future. Enoch could make no terms now; he had married her. And it was Georgiana's opinion that for a pioneer, sterling and splendid though he was, to win Mary Stockwell for a wife was a piece of supreme good fortune.

Georgiana felt that she must face her problem now. She had no excuse to stay longer with Cal. How easy to name those facts! But a host of considerations, like enemies ambushing her trail, rushed out to confront her. And the very first was a strange, stubborn, utterly incomprehensible vacillation. "Wait," it whispered. "No hurry! Do not face it now." The others trooped after this traitorous weakness. When would she go? Where? How? From what source could she get money to take her away? Was it possible now for her to confess her trouble to anyone? What might happen to her? And lastly a sickening, humiliating why—why go at all?

Thus Georgiana encountered an unexpected phase in her problem. Not that it altered her decision in the least! She had to go. But it made for increased perturbation and conflict. The very thought of the future appalled her.

AT THE cabin Cal hesitated just as he was about to help her dismount. He looked up at her. The wide brim of his beaver sombrero hid his face.

"I'd like to ask—are you sorry you went?"

"No. I'm glad, Cal," she replied instantly, somehow wanting him to know.

"Why?" he added.

"Two reasons. Now that I know what it is I wouldn't have missed seeing Mary's happiness—not for any real or fancied fear in the world."

"Huh!" he said as if he fully comprehended.

"The other reason is that I was wrong," she continued hurriedly. "Whatever it was I—I hated existed only in me. I forgot it. I had a wonderful time. And so I found everybody nice and kind."

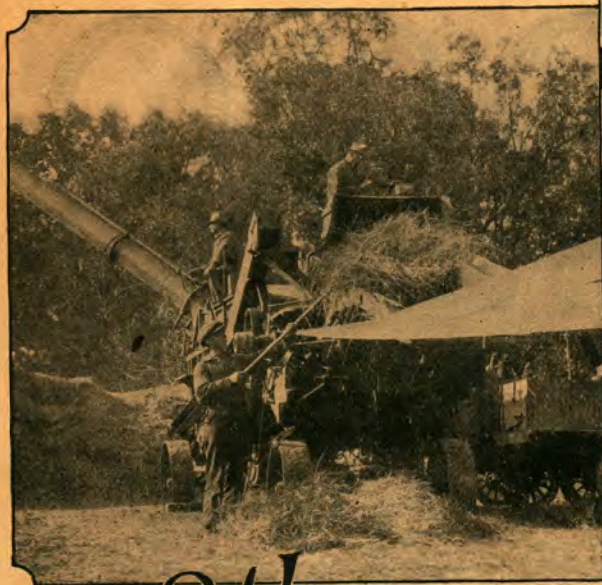
"Aw now, that's fine!" he exploded. "But I had a rotten time." He removed his sombrero, as if to let the wind cool his fevered head. Then in the moonlight his face appeared pale and somber. "It was worse for me than I expected. My family, all the old women, the boys—even Tim Matthews, comin' to me, speakin' high of you—tellin' me they had been wrong an' I was right . . . tellin' how sorry they were—apologizin' to me for what they'd said of you. . . . You had been only a motherless child. . . . Now all was well an' I deserved such a wonderful little wife—an'an' they were so glad I was happy. . . ."

"It must have been awful," she replied sympathetically. "I'm sorry you had to endure that for me."

"Reckon I'm glad I went," he returned quickly. "If this was the only time I'd ever have to listen to them. But what kills me is the thought of the next time—when—when—"

His voice broke huskily and trailed off. Georgiana understood him to mean when she told the secret of their marriage and left him to scorn and ridicule.

(Continued on Page 18)



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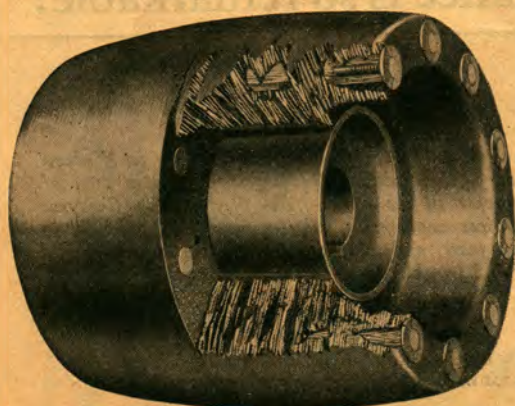
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Of course, you can get this *better drive pulley* on *any machine*, if you insist. Also, you should have Rockwood, *The Drive Pulley*, on each of your old machines. Order through your nearest implement dealer, or write to us.

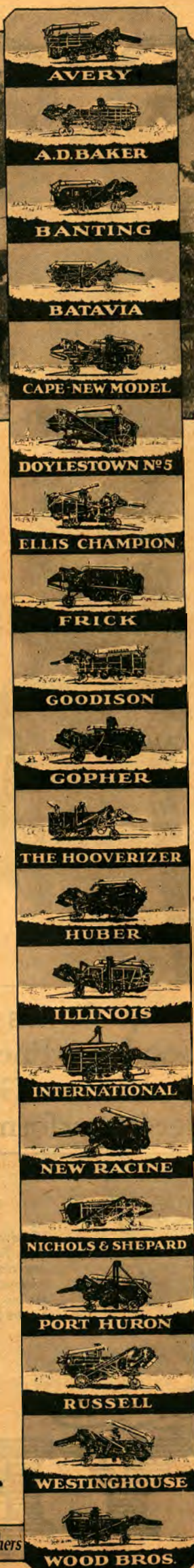
THE ROCKWOOD MFG. CO., INDIANAPOLIS



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ROCKWOOD *The DRIVE PULLEY*

Standard Equipment on These Dependable Threshers



(Continued from Page 16)

"Cal, I'll stay, if it means so much to you—and for Mary's sake," she whispered, impelled beyond resistance. "I'll stay a while longer—for your sake and hers—if you'll not expect too much of me."

"Georgie, darlin'," he cried wildly, with a throb in his voice. "I beg you—stay—on any conditions. I'll ask nothin' of you—nothin'. I swear."

"Very—well," faltered Georgiana, and slid off her horse. How cramped and dizzy she felt suddenly! She wanted to run, but could scarcely walk. "Good night."

"Reckon you'd better come in the kitchen an' get warm," Cal called as she started away.

But she stumbled across the porch and entered her room. She did not feel the cold. The darkness of the room was welcome. Anything to get out from under that pitiless, bright, all-seeing moon! She did not light the lamp. Throwing off gloves, hood, scarf and coats, she bent with trembling hands to unlace her boots. Soon she was in bed, creeping deep under the blankets, throbbing and burning.

What was it that she had done? Coward and liar and cheat again! For Cal's sake and Mary's she had consented to remain there a while longer. Maybe, a little—but mostly for her own! Thus she groveled in her shame. Did she want to stay of her own accord? Absurd! Yet she had grasped at the barest excuse. She had not considered. Impulse had governed her. Cal had loomed strangely in her sight. Did his people know him better than she did?

But into this conflicting tide of emotion there entered the quieting influence of a great relief. She did not have to run away just yet. She did not need to face that appalling future tomorrow or next day.

XXII

SPRING! Winter had gone with the fleeting February, and the snow line had vanished from the Rim, and the wild turkeys were gobbling from every ridge. The sun shone warm. Already the red soil of Rock Spring Mesa had begun to dry. One-half the mesa field had been cleared of stumps and rocks, and would soon be ready for spring plowing. The other half was slowly clearing to Cal's strenuous labors. Georgiana had stayed on a while longer. She had not been away from the homestead. Mary had visited her once, upon her return with Enoch from Phoenix. A pile of magazines and a shelf of books had been added to Georgiana's room. She worked much the same as during the first weeks of her stay there, only not quite so hard. She spent more time outdoors now.

All had really changed, her physical being, her spirit, her attitude towards life, yet nothing seemed different because Cal kept his promise. He had asked nothing of her. He left her alone, except during those daily hours when their joint labors and mealtimes necessarily brought them together. Georgiana, in her loneliness, in her growing hunger for she knew not what, thought that she might have forgiven him if he had reverted a little to his former self. But he seemed another person now, a boy no longer, a man—kind, serious, preoccupied but not bitter any more, grateful for Georgiana's presence and help, yet never by word or action overstepping what he deemed his place.

Georgiana resented his humility. Had he not carried her off as ruthlessly as the Roman gladiator had the Sabine woman? Had he not stopped her wildcat scratch and bite, and her screams, with a sudden brutal blow? Always that rankled in her. Yet time had softened the shame of it, if not the memory.

ONE March day a startling and disturbing and most thrilling bit of news came in the shape of a letter from Mary, brought by a rider. An uncle of the sisters had died, and in his will bequeathed each of them several thousand dollars. Just how much Mary could not determine from their mother's letter, but they would soon receive the heritage. Strange how Georgiana reacted to this news of good fortune! She was not overjoyed. She had a feeling of gladness for Mary. For herself there came only the thought that now she could go. There was something inevitable about it. She did not mention the fact of the inheritance to Cal.

Next morning before she awoke Cal rode off down to Ryson. Georgiana had the whole day to herself, to think over the unlimited possibilities open to her. A decision

to follow several of them seemed made only to be changed.

Cal returned after dark, and the instant Georgiana saw his telltale face she knew something unusual had happened. He studiously avoided meeting her eyes, and to her timid query he replied briefly: "Nothin' much."

Georgiana lost her dread, but curiosity and concern remained. On the following morning, after breakfast, Cal rode up to the porch and called her.

"Reckon I'd like to tell you somethin'," he said as she appeared in the door.

"Yes?" she returned. His cool, easy, dry, rather biting tone roused her curiosity more than the content of his words. Then she became aware of the piercing gaze of his eyes.

"Georgie, do you remember the day I made you marry me?"

"I'll say I do," she replied in unaffected surprise.

"You thought I struck you—knocked you senseless?"

"Yes. Didn't you?"

He gazed down at her in a way that made her feel infinitely small and narrow-minded.

"NO!" he declared ringingly. "I was rough. But I didn't strike you. My horse ran us under a tree. Your head hit a branch. That's all."

"Why have you let me think all this time that you did strike me?"

"Reckon at first it served my purpose to scare you," he admitted. "But after we were married it made me sore to think you could believe I'd hurt you."

"Huh!" replied Georgiana, imitating him. "Well, why did you tell me now?"

"I'm ridin' over to the Bar XX," he replied coolly, with his intent gaze on her face. He was neither audacious nor reckless, yet something of both pertained to his tone. Georgiana knew enough about the Thurmans now to realize that this strange, cool, baffling mood was dangerous.

"Bar—XX?" she stammered.

"Yes, an' if I don't happen to get back by sundown you saddle up an' ride over to Uncle Gard's."

"Will you be—there?" she asked, beginning to shake in alarm.

"No. I won't be there or here," he replied. "But I reckon I'll be back early. I just wanted to tell you what to do in case —"

"Cal!" she cried piercingly.

"So long, Georgiana May," he called with all his old bitterness and something of mockery. His last glance seemed full of fiery reproach. Then he spurred his horse and like a brown flash was off across the clearing.

"Cal!" she screamed after him. But he did not heed. And quickly he was out of sight in the timber.

"Bar XX!" exclaimed Georgiana in distress. "That is Saunders' ranch. Bloom is foreman of the Bar XX. Bid Hatfield is there."

THE first hours of that day severely punished Georgiana. She fell prey to morbid dread and fear. But gradually her reasoning began to overcome her intuitive sense that catastrophe threatened. Even if Cal had ridden over to the Bar XX to confront Bid Hatfield it could hardly mean more than a fight. She had not heard of a Thurman fight for weeks, not since Wess had confessed to the boys that he could not sleep or eat or be happy any more until he fought Tuck Merry. The obliging Tuck had consented to give Wess the chance to relieve his overcharged feelings in the matter, with the result that Wess was speedily and soundly thrashed.

"I'd hate to have Bid Hatfield beat Cal," soliloquized Georgiana resentfully. "He's older than Cal, and much bigger. Oh, I hope I am just borrowing trouble."

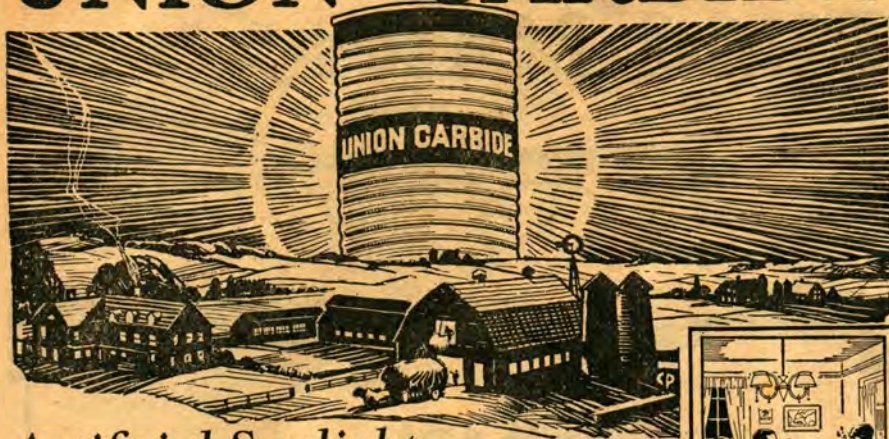
About an hour before sunset, when Georgiana was in the kitchen beginning to prepare for the evening meal, she heard the pound of hoofs outside. It startled her. Cal was returning. A strange new thrill of gladness shot through her.

"Whoa thar—steady," called out a rough voice that certainly was not Cal's.

Georgiana flew to open the door. She saw before her a tall rider—Wess Thurman—and two horses, and over the hindmost horse hung the limp shape of a man, head down from the saddle.

(TO BE CONCLUDED)

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His Conviction

"WELL, Squire," began a citizen, "who are the Demopublicrats going to nominate for the Presidency?"

"On account of the various complicating circumstances, I can't exactly tell you, Adrian," replied Squire Ramsbottom, the acute political war horse and justice of the peace of Petunia. "But I will say without hesitation that I am convinced a gentle sizzle-sozzle rain, lasting about thirty-six hours, would do this neighborhood a whole lot of good."

A Doubtful Compliment

"AH, MR. GLOOM! What do you think of my new suit?" asked the wearer of the sartorial creation.

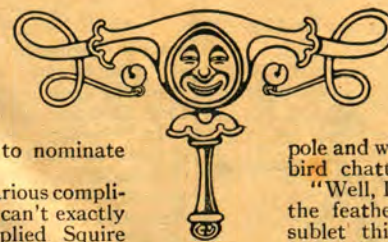
"Why, Mr. Sloucher," responded J. Fuller Gloom, "I am pleased to say that it couldn't fit you any better if you had ordered it by mail."

The Forum

JOHNNY an' Lije an' Harrison Tate
Was a-carryin' on at a terrible rate
Last Sunday night by th' kitchen fire,
A-cussin' th' tariff on balin' wire.
An' I asked 'em what, if they knew so much,
Was th' need o' this income tax an' such?
So Lije spoke up, from across his pipe,
An' he give th' party in power a swipe.
It must 'a' been 'long about half-past nine,
An' Harrison Tate was a-goin' fine
On th' general topic o' Bolsheveeks,
When th' front-porch door give a couple o' squeaks.
Well, I missed some points o' th' Roosians' fate,
For a voice from th' front room says: "You wait!
What's this I see? You four galoots!
On Sunday night, in your muddy boots!
A-trampin' dirt on my kitchen floors!
An' what's become o' th' Sunday chores?"
Then she caught her breath, an' I prayed she's done,
But not my Mary—she'd jest begun!
She set her jaw like a Cossack might,
An' read us out o' th' party right.
For there—in plain sight—
Harrison Tate
Was a-fumblin' 'round with an a c c e - h i g h straight!
—W. Greenough.

Quite True

TO THE lay mind an egg is an achievement.



As Usual

BITS of broken nest came down from the bird house on the pole and with it a volley of indignant bird chatter.

"Well, I've had my lesson," cried the feathered matron. "I'll never sublet this place for the summer again. See the condition they've left it in. . . . Why, they even sharpened their beaks on the woodwork!"

Garden Gossip

THE ladyslipper, sad to hear,
Has had a trying time this year.
Not blooming bright as hitherto,
But hanging limp and worn through
It spent its energies upon
That craze, the dancing marathon.
—A. H. Folwell.

The Model

CHESTER BROMLEY is so punctilious he gets on my nerves.
"What's the matter with him?"
"He won't eat crab apples without a fish fork."

A Different Tune

I LIST the plowman's merry song,
As up the row he plods along;
And then come words that make me jump,
As the plow's nose hooks in a stump.

Our Well-Known Sleuth

OUR well-known sleuth, Constable Sam T. Slackputter, is so busy just now trying to dope out a plan to manufacture folding parking places that can be carried right along in motor cars, that he hasn't time to attend to anything else," related the landlord of the Petunia tavern.

"Well—ha! ha!—he isn't in any danger of accomplishing it, is he?" chortled a guest to whom the surprising fact was being related.

"I claim he ain't. He'll be baffled by that just as he is by almost everything else."

Masculine Resentment

MOTHER (reprovingly): I am terribly ashamed of you. Why did you strike your little playmate?

JOHNNY (disheveled but triumphant): He went and called me a little gentleman and I made him take it back.



SISTER: Come Away, Tommy. If He Should Fall in This Direction Where Would You Be?

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