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Booth Tarkington
On Marriage

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Hettie saw Jim Lacy loom over her. She felt herself seized in iron arms and dragged from her horse

"Nevada"

A romance of the West

By Zane Grey

ILLUSTRATED BY STOCKTON MULFORD

A WEEK later, to the day, about the middle of the afternoon, Jim Lacy stood with Cash Burridge on the Mongollon Rim, facing south over the magnificent wilderness of southern Arizona.

Yellow dust palls hung over the steep Maricopa trail, where it jumped zigzag off the Rim and wound down into the green depths. A mighty roar of trampling hoofs, and bellowing cattle, and crashing brush, and whooping riders waved up from that hot slope. From the look of the trail, trampled and dug and widened by thousands of hoofs, it appeared that a river of live beasts had poured over the Rim.

"Lacy, it's all over but the fireworks," said Cash exultantly.

"*Quien sabe?* It might fetch some fireworks you're not figurin' on," admonished his companion.

"Not much. We're shakin' the dust of the brakes. Say, won't Ben Ide an' Tom Day bite nails? Biggest drive I ever had a hand in. An' all so easy! All like clock-work! All in a couple of days, in spite of that yellow traitor, Cedar Hatt!"

"Shore, we didn't need him," responded Lacy thoughtfully.

"Jim, I've seen some mad hombres in my time, but that Cedar Hatt beats them all," declared Burridge, aghast at the memory.

"Shore he was mad. Didn't I warn you to keep your outfit from givin' it away about Stillwell?"

"Yes, you did; an' I talked myself hoarse. But it couldn't be kept. They hated Cedar; an' the minute somebody got two drinks aboard, he up an' blows that Burt Stillwell was dead. It sure made a hydrophobia-coyote out of Cedar. But he didn't know *who* shot Burt. When he spit questions at you, like a snake with a hunch, why didn't you lie?"

"Wal, Cash, I reckon you don't savvy me."

"Why didn't you kill him, then?"

"I just about did," returned Lacy, reflectively. "But I saw he didn't have the nerve to draw—so I waited."

"Ahuh! Waited? I get your hunch. Cedar knows somethin' you're keen to find out. Bet it's that Pine Tree Outfit."

"Cash, you're figurin' fair. But on the daid square now—rememberin' the favors I've done you—cain't you tell me somethin' about that outfit?"

"No more'n we all know, Jim."

"Shore you have some suspicion about who leads them?"

"Honest, I haven't even an idee," returned Burridge, with truth in look and

voice. "What's it to you, anyway, Jim?"

"Reckon I've got to put my brand on the boss of the Pine Tree," said Lacy.

"Oh! Is *that* all? I thought you might have some interest in him," retorted Cash, sarcastically. "Jim, on the square, if you hadn't done so much to straighten me out again, I'd have suspicions about you."

"Wal, keep them in your haid!"

Burridge laughed, and gathering up his bridle swung into the saddle.

"Come on. I don't want the outfit to get far ahead. You'll be hearin' the clink of gold before sundown."

"Not me, Cash. I'm not goin' any farther with you."

Burridge studied his companion for a long moment, his face working. Regret began to erase the incredulity.

"Well, what in thunder are you goin' to do?"

"That's my concern now. I'm through."

"Through! . . . Jim Lacy, you're too deep for me. But I'm gettin' a hunch. . . . How about your share in the divvy for this deal?"

"There won't be any. Judge Franklidge has been tipped off, and his men'll be waitin' on the other side of the Rim. You know what that means. I'm givin' you this chance to escape. Try bein' honest again. You might succeed next time. But *don't* try to warn the rest of the bunch, and don't ever come back heah!"

"Why not, Jim?"

"Because, if you do, I'll kill you!" flashed Lacy, in a voice that cut like a whip.

The ruddy heat left Burridge's face, and he began to nod his head, slowly, with increasing motion, while his eyes fixed in a startling comprehension.

"*Jim—Lacy!*" he said, huskily.

"I reckon," replied Lacy grimly, as he turned to his horse.

"Well, you been a pard to me, whatever your reasons," went on Burridge, with feeling. "I don't care a darn what they were. . . . I'll get out of this country. Here's my hand on it. . . . Good-by, an' good luck!"

"Same to you," replied Jim, as they gripped hands.

Burridge wheeled his horse so violently that it reared and plunged, and then slid to its haunches in the soft ground where the trail led back down the slope.

LACY strode into the level shady forest, leading his horse. He had prepared for this separation from the rustlers, and had tied a light pack behind his saddle. There was a spring in his step and a light on his face. The deep forest land, beginning to

slope almost at once north from the Rim, seemed to receive and absorb Lacy as a transformed man.

It wanted yet an hour before sunset. Jim Lacy, with his plans well in mind, had on the whole journey across country from Elam Hatt's ranch to the head of the Maricopa trail taken careful account of the lay of the land.

It served him now. His intention was to return to Hatt's ranch, if possible, without encountering even a sheep herder. Hatt had left his daughter Rose alone. Elam, of course, with his two sons, could be expected to get back home from the cattle drive in two days from the time Jim had left them, or even less.

AS FOR Cedar Hatt, who had deserted Burridge and Elam after the revelation of Stillwell's death, no doubt he had rushed to the secret rendezvous of the Pine Tree men, wherever that was, there to betray to them news of the impending drive of the Ide stock. It was Cedar Hatt in whom Lacy had the greatest interest, at the present stage of the game; and Cedar was most likely to be found at or near home.

There was reason, too, for Lacy to have an interview with Rose Hatt, from whom he expected to force more about the man who dominated her brother, and whom she feared. Moreover, Rose was to be considered on her own behalf.

Jim Lacy did not think it wise to go near Silver Meadows, where the cattle had been collected for the great drive. Therefore, when he broke camp next morning he made a wide detour, hoping to strike the trail he and the rustler band had made coming from Hatt's ranch. But he had to go into camp the second night of his journey without having found it.

On the next morning, however, he struck the trail he was looking for, and backtracked it until it failed on high ridges, on hard ground, rocky flats, and pine-needle masses over which Elam Hatt had led the rustlers, for the express purpose of hiding their tracks.

Lacy lost no time by trying to recover them, though he believed he could eventually have done so. Sure of his direction now, he pressed on rapidly, and the next afternoon struck the deep brake east of the one in which Hatt lived.

He took the precaution to ride well back from the Rim, peeping over whenever opportunity offered from behind foliage or rock covert. He did not really expect to see anyone, but that did not influence his actions. Lacy was always cautious, watchful, alert; and in this instance he

might have been on a scent, so instinctive was his progress along that Rim.

Presently, down in an open bend of the deep canyon, Lacy caught a glimpse of a rider. He was coming slowly up the trail, leaning down from his saddle, evidently with eyes on the ground.

Lacy rode back from the Rim, and urged his horse to a lope, careful to avoid rocks and brush. There were places where he had to go slowly, but in the main he covered a mile or more in short order, then again approached the Rim.

This time he dismounted and cautiously stole to a vantage point, from which he could peer unseen. As luck would have it, there was an open grassy meadow, narrow and long, just beneath his position. The canyon was five hundred feet deep at this point, green-walled, precipitous, and insurmountable.

LACY watched so long without seeing the rider that he believed he had been too late to catch him crossing this open flat. But as he had about decided to hurry on again the rider emerged from the lower end.

"Cedar Hatt!" whispered Lacy, his head lowering with the motion of a striking eagle. "Talk about luck! I'm shore smothered with it. . . . Jim Lacy's luck! . . . But bad for you, Cedar!"

He watched the rider with a strained, piercing gaze, as if it were possible to divine his motive.

"This might be the trail Marvie Blaine rides when he comes to meet Rose," soliloquized Jim, pondering. "Shore it is. She said the brake east of where she lived."

Cedar Hatt rode on, directly under Jim's position, and once he halted his horse, to lean far down from his saddle. How like an Indian! Then he swung up in the saddle to peer ahead, as if calculating something. He made a dark, wild figure then, suiting his ragged horse and the background of tangled brush and rugged wall. Then he rode on, more slowly.

"By heaven," burst out Lacy, "that hombre is trackin' Marvie Blaine!"

Lacy crawled back from the Rim, then rose to run for his horse. Luckily, the lower part of the brakes was miles below the locality where Rose was in the habit of meeting young Blaine. Lacy had time to get ahead and find a place where he could descend to the floor of the canyon. Riding still farther back from the Rim, he put his horse to a gallop and made a hard, fast ride for several miles.

Then he slowed down and headed for the Rim again. No break in sight where he might descend! The wall grew more precipitous and higher.

At length Lacy came upon an intersecting canyon, a narrow crack which ran off into the woods. He rode back to where it headed in one of the thickest ravines, so common to the country. He rode down as far as possible, then, dismounting, he tied his horse and hurried on. This gorge deepened into a split between toppling walls, so rough that there was not even a deer trail. But Lacy, sparing no effort, traversed it, to reach the main canyon, hot and bruised, and out of breath.

Under cover of the oak thicket that lined the slope from the wall, he rested a few moments, listening like a pursued deer.

The east side of the canyon was a gentle

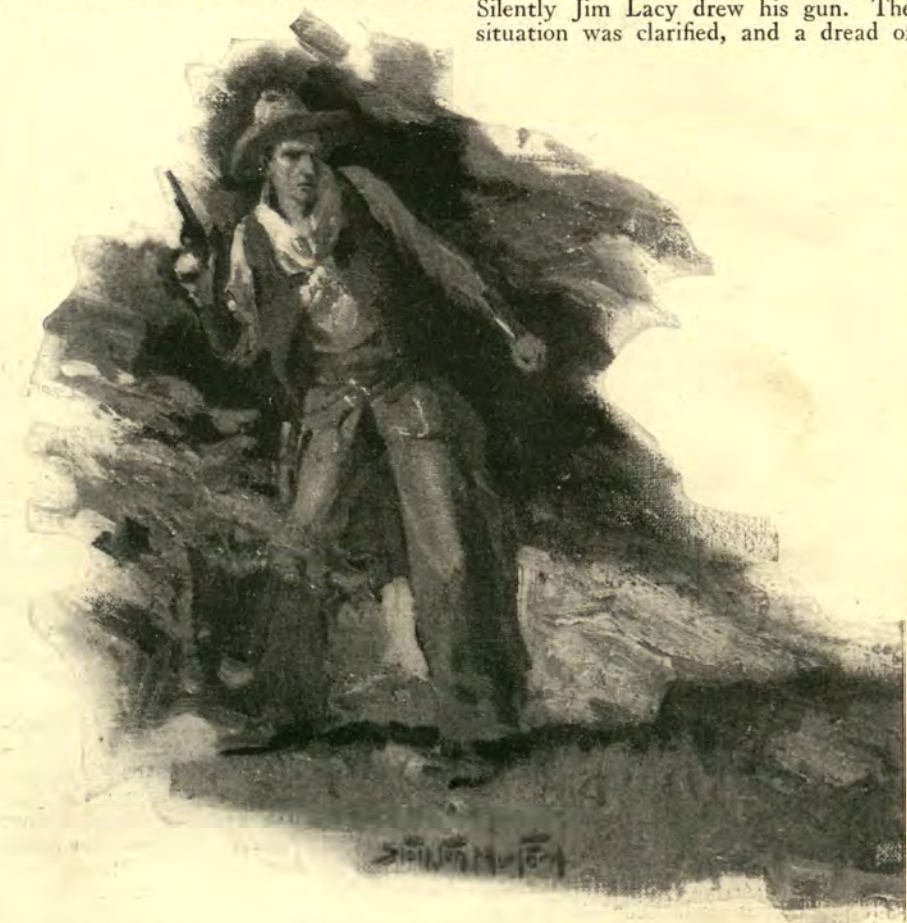
slope, covered with white grass, brown ferns, and low pines and oaks, affording perfect cover for anyone hiding. Lacy worked gradually down toward the level of the canyon. He did not snap twigs, or scrape brush, or make any sound. At each little opening he peered out before advancing. Often he stopped to listen.

It was through this extreme caution and the eye of a woodsman that Lacy came upon Marvie Blaine and Rose Hatt.

They were in each other's arms, lost in the enchantment of their dreams. But they had chosen a secluded nook, half way

All at once an idea flashed to Jim—buckskin over rock! Cedar Hatt always wore buckskin. Close at hand there were corners of cliff, ledges, huge slabs of rock. The instant that thought stood clear in Lacy's mind he grew stiff, intense in the grasp of a sensation for which he could never find an adequate name. It amounted almost to a power of divination. It always brought the icy steadiness of his nerves.

THEN, from the dark shadow of pines behind Marvie, a lithe figure glided. Silently Jim Lacy drew his gun. The situation was clarified, and a dread of



up the grassy pine-dotted slope, from which they could see, by peering under the low-spreading branches, both up and down the trail. At this moment, however, they would not have become aware of the approach of an army.

Lacy seemed struck to the heart by their rapture and the poignant pang that rent his own breast. He understood. He had lived that. He knew the sweetness and glory of love. He sank to his knees, feeling that he had no right to interrupt their sacred hour.

MARVIE bent over Rose, whose head lay upon his breast, with her face upturned to his. If they were whispering, Lacy could not hear, though he was close. But he doubted that they were whispering. Both bliss and tragedy seemed to hover over these youthful lovers.

Suddenly, Lacy heard a sound that cruelly disrupted both the pain and the joy he felt. It had been faint, therefore hard to locate. It could come from either near or far. It seemed to have been a slippery, gliding sound, as of a soft substance in contact with one rough and hard.

something he could not see or control faded away.

Marvie never looked up from the beloved face, until Cedar Hatt halted. It was clear to Jim that Cedar's sudden, violent check came from the surprise of seeing Rose in Marvie's arms.

Marvie likewise started. Rose screamed. She swayed up to her feet, and with hands out she backed until the pine tree stopped her.

"So, hyar's why you run off from me to-day?" Cedar shouted, fiercely. The muscles of his neck swelled, his lean jaw protruded.

"Don't—don't hurt me—Cedar!" cried Rose, upon her knees before him.

"I'll beat you half to death. So, hyar's why you played sick to-day, an' then run off. You lyin' hussy! Answer me!"

"Yes—yes, Cedar. I—I did," replied Rose, sagging back against the tree.

"This hyar ain't no accident?" he demanded, with a forceful gesture toward the stricken Marvie.

"No. I come—on purpose."
"Who's this hyar young buck?"
"I'll never tell!" flashed Rose.

Marvie stumbled to his feet and stepped forward, livid of face, but resolute.

"I'll tell you," he said.

"Don't—don't!" cried Rose.

"Well, who air you?" demanded Cedar.

"I'm Marvin Blaine," answered the lad.

"I live with Ben Ide. We're related."

"Ben Ide! . . . O-ho! You belong to them rich Ide folks, huh, as wouldn't wipe their feet on sich as us Hatts? Wal, blast your white skin, what you doin' hyar with my sister?"

"I—I love her," answered Marvie, manfully.

Cedar knocked him down.

"I'll kick your heart out," he snarled.

Marvie rolled out of reach, leaped to his feet, and came back.

"I seen you kissin' Rose. Playin' with my sister, huh? An' you belong to them Ides!"

"Cedar, it's not—what you think," burst out Rose, with the scarlet dyeing her face.

"Git out, you lyin' little hussy! If you'll lie about one thing you'll lie about

"O-ho! Double-crossin' Ed an' all of us, hey? You black-eyed cat! . . . Get your hoss, an' soon as I take the hide off this kid lover of yours, we'll—"

"Cedar Hatt, you'll have to pack me dead—if you take me one single step. . . . You'll never drag me alive to your Pine Tree—"

"Shut up!" interrupted Cedar, and he struck her down.

Marvie, with furious imprecation, rushed at Hatt, only to be sent staggering against the tree.

"I'll blow your insides out," yelled Cedar, reaching for his gun.

BUT before he could draw, Marvie closed with him, and as Hatt dragged the gun out they began a swift struggle for possession of it.

Here Jim bounded out of his covert and down the slope, his gun half leveled. Neither of the contestants was aware of his presence; but Rose saw him, and she shrieked.

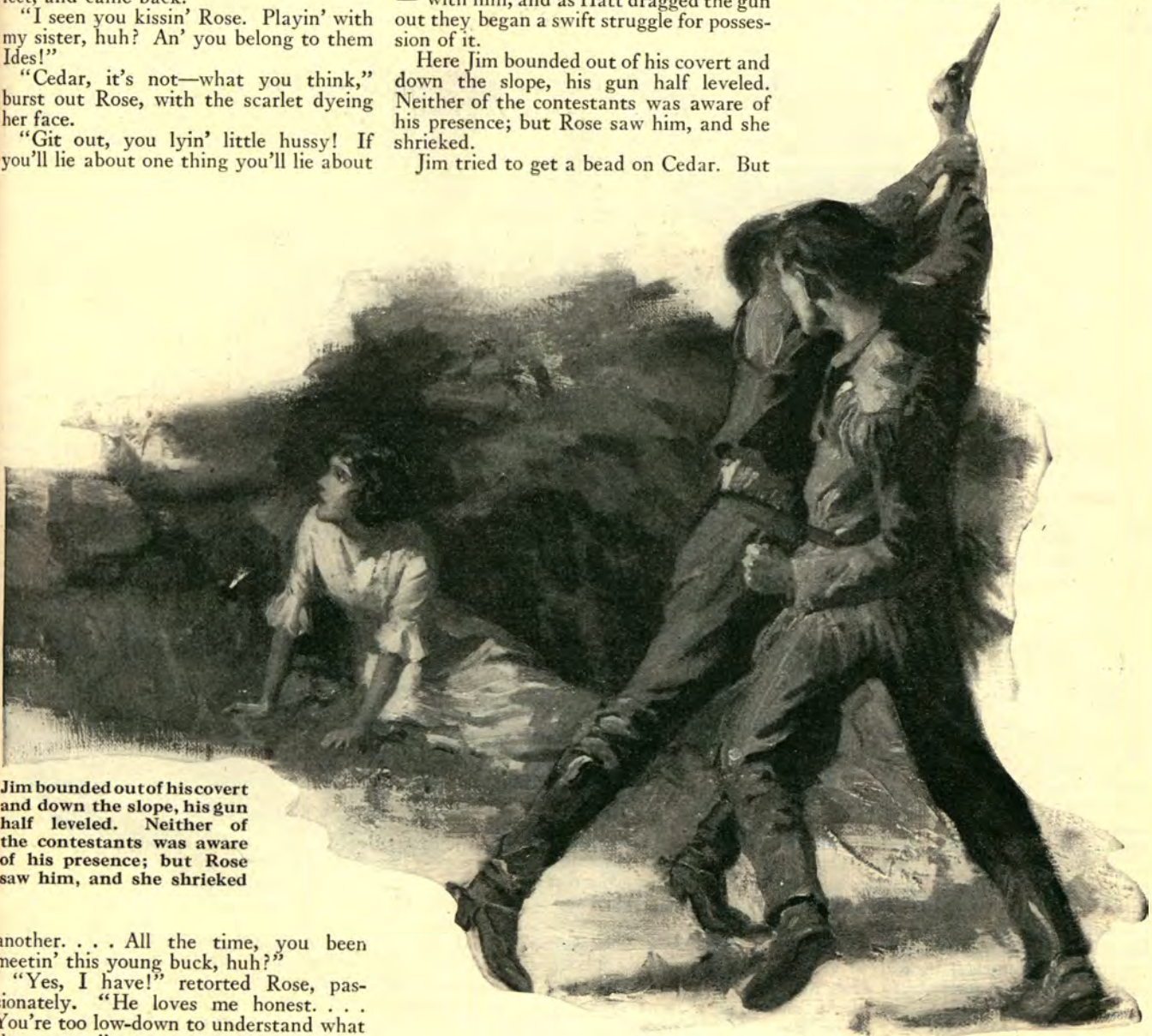
Jim tried to get a bead on Cedar. But

Marvie had not yet seen his savior. No doubt he thought the shots had been fired accidentally in the struggle, wounding Cedar. Quick as a flash he snatched up Cedar's gun, and leveling it with both hands he worked the trigger.

Cedar Hatt clutched at his breast. An awful, blank surprise rendered his expression once more human. With gasps his mouth opened. Then he reeled, and fell at Marvie's feet.

Marvie began to sag, changing his crouching position. The smoking gun dropped from his limp hands. Rose, on her knees, with a red stain on her lips, rocked to and fro, mute with terror.

"Wal, Marvie, that wasn't so bad for a



Jim bounded out of his covert and down the slope, his gun half leveled. Neither of the contestants was aware of his presence; but Rose saw him, and she shrieked

another. . . . All the time, you been meetin' this young buck, huh?"

"Yes, I have!" retorted Rose, passionately. "He loves me honest. . . . You're too low-down to understand what that means."

"Ed Richardson will kill you fer this!" hissed Cedar.

"Let him kill me then!" returned Rose, with an equal passion. "I don't belong to him. I hate him. Did he ever talk honest love to me? Bah! But Marvie Blaine did. An' he's made a woman out of me."

"Hatt, I've asked—Rose to marry—me," interposed Marvie, beside himself with emotion.

"Yes; an' his sister is goin' to give me a decent home till I'm old enough," added Rose.

he had to be sure of his aim. He did not want to risk injuring Marvie. As they whirled and wrestled, Cedar pulled his arm over his head, his hand clutching the gun; Marvie clung desperately to that arm.

Jim took a snap shot at Cedar's gun hand. Missed! He snapped another and the bullet tore Cedar's hand almost off. The gun went flying, while Cedar, backing away from Marvie, cursing hideously, suddenly froze stiff at sight of Jim.

youngster," said Jim, stepping forward. "I was just about to plug him myself."

As if a giant arm were grinding him around, the lad turned.

"Who . . . are . . . you?"

"Reckon I'm your old pard Nevada, of Forlorn River days," replied Jim, and then he grasped Marvie as he collapsed. He embraced him and half carried him toward the tree, where Rose now clung, trying to get to her feet. "Brace up, boy. It's all over. There. . . . (Continued on page 103)

"Nevada"

(Continued from page 65)

An' you, Rose, buck up. Why, you're both showin' yellow after as game a fight as two kids ever made. . . . That's right. Let him lean against you. Wal, wall!"

Marvie, with eyes starting, cried out, "Oh, my heaven! . . . It's you—Nevada!"

"Shore is, boy; an' glad to meet you again."

"Mr. Lacy . . . do . . . you . . . know Marvie?" faltered Rose.

"Wal, I should smile. Me an' Marvie are old pards."

"Lacy?" cried Marvie, starting up incredulously. "But . . . you're Nevada."

"Son, the Nevada you knew was Jim Lacy."

"My heaven! What will Ben say? . . . An' Hettie!"

"Reckon they'll say a lot—when they know. But promise me you won't give me away."

"Aw, Nevada, if you only knew how Ben—"

"Marvie, I'm not askin' you to keep it secret forever," interrupted Jim hastily.

"But for a little while. Promise, old pard."

"I . . . will," replied Marvie, choking.

"An' you too, Rose?"

"I can keep secrets."

"Shore. An' now, Rose, let's get this confab over. I reckon my hunch is correct. But I need to know shore."

"I'll tell you anythin'," she replied, under her breath.

"YOU know who is haid of this Pine Tree Outfit?" queried Nevada, bending down to the agitated face.

"Yes, sir," replied Rose. "Some of his men called him Campbell. But he told Cedar his real name was Ed Richardson. He's from New Mexico. He figgered in the Lincoln County War, an' was close to Billy the Kid. He fetched rustlers here with him. An' he got hold of Cedar, an' Burt Stillwell, an' Stewart, an' other Arizona riders whose names I never heard."

"Rose, how'd you happen on this?"

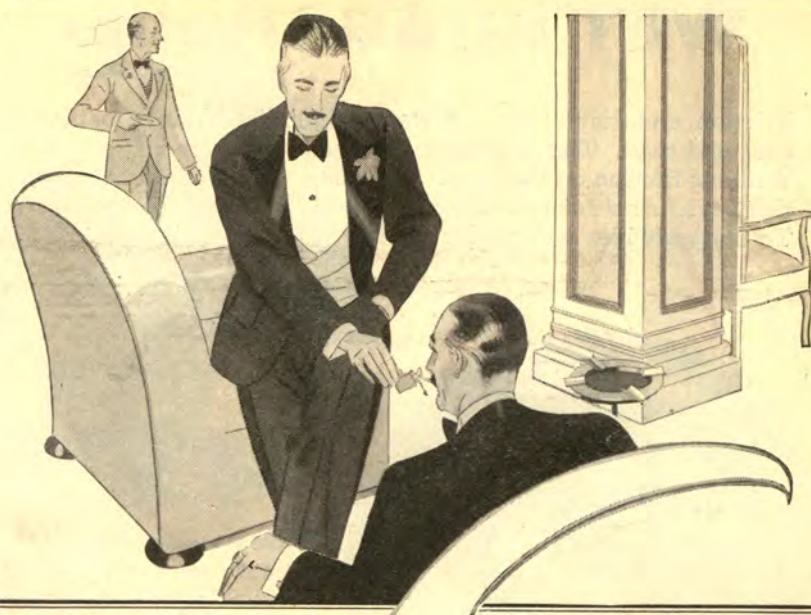
"Cedar fetched Clan Dillon to our ranch, an' he tried to make up to me," went on Rose. "I liked him first off. But I soon saw what he was up to. An' I had no use for him. Well, one day Cedar threw me on a horse an' rode me off to a cabin over here in Piñon Brake. Dillon was there. He tried makin' more love to me. But I bit an' kicked an' clawed him. Then the men they was expectin' rode up, an' I got thrown in the loft. Some of them were drunk. They all had money. An' they gambled an' stayed up all night. In the mornin' they had a pow-wow, an' I heard it. Then Cedar fetched me back home, an' swore he'd kill me if I squealed."

"Clan Dillon, then, is Ed Richardson—haid of this Pine Tree Outfit," said Nevada. "An' Ben Ide's foreman."

"Yes, sir," replied Rose bravely, with lips that trembled.

"Good lord!" ejaculated Marvie. "Ben swears by Dillon. He's gone against Raidy, his oldest hand. . . . I wouldn't want to be in Dillon's boots when Ben finds out!"

"Wal, Marvie, it's likely that Dillon's



THIS MATCHLESS AGE

At the Clubs

SHEDDING the mantle of the commonplace, assuming the prideful ease that is his right of membership: So enters a man his club.

The world is his, and he would banish bother from it. Seizing upon appurtenances that befit this matchless age, he waves away the old and bunglesome.

He discarded matches for a lighter—and when the Douglass appeared last winter it found his pocket first. For the Douglass is automatic. No gadgets to fumble, no wheels to thumb; it lights at the mere press of a trigger.

To possess such a simple, practical lighter had long been the hobby of Leon F. Douglass, one of the founders of the Victor Talking Machine Company. He tried out lighters of every land. Then he set his own creative genius to the task—a versatile gen-

ius for which he has been granted nearly half a hundred patents.

The first Douglass Lighter was for his personal use, the next for a critical crony.

Now the Douglass comes in many styles—in gold and silver and rare leathers. And each is made with a precision that insures unfailing service.

If the Douglass isn't on sale at your club, or you do not come handily upon a jeweler, tobacconist or such who can show it to you, write Hargraft & Sons, Wrigley Building, Chicago. They will direct you, and send you, too, an informative leaflet called "This Matchless Age." THE DOUGLASS CO.

DEALERS who have not yet stocked the Douglass need reminding that there is no closed season on matches for smokers, therefore none on Douglass Lighters. They should write Hargraft.

*Press the trigger
there's your light*

For slender fingers a Douglass cased with lizard, water snake, ostrich, or colored calfskin. More rugged leathers—pigskin, tooled morocco, for men



LOOK FOR NAME DOUGLASS ON BOTTOM OF LIGHTER.

Douglass Lighters are also offered in metal cases with a pleasing variety of finishes. The prices start at \$5 and vary according to the finish selected.



The Douglass Lighter

SPONSORED BY HARGRAFT

WET RUBBER *slips*

Friction, and friction alone, prevents skidding. Friction between tires and road. The best brakes are helpless when friction fails. Without friction on the road, tires slide, car skids forward and sideways. *And friction fails whenever rubber tires get wet.* To illustrate how wet rubber slips:



Take a rubber pencil eraser

Hold the pencil firmly and try to slide it over a glass surface. Note how the rubber sets up a friction against the glass—how it adheres.

Now wet the glass and try it again. Note how the rubber slips and skids the instant it reaches the wet area.



(After every rain newspapers bear mute testimony to the hundreds of skids that could be prevented by WEED Chains)

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You can identify genuine WEED Tire Chains by their red connecting hooks, gray galvanized side chains and brass plated cross chains with the name WEED stamped on every hook.



WEED CHAINS *grip*

"There can be no compromise with safety"

boots will be stickin' out straight when Ben heahs the truth. . . .

"Marvie, get your horse, an' put Rose on hers, an' leave heah pronto for the Ide ranch. Look sharp, an' don't run into any riders. When you reach home turn Rose over to Hettie; an' both of you keep your mouths shut!"

Marvie had started to lead Rose away, when he espied Cedar Hatt's gun lying on the brown pine needles.

"Nevada—can I take it?"

"What? Oh, Cedar's gun? Shore, you take it."

The girl turned with lips parted. "Mr. Jim—Nevada—we'll see you again?"

"I reckon. Remember, I trust you to keep mum. Look sharp now, an' hurry along!"

Nevada did not linger to watch them find and mount their horses; however, as he started up the slope he heard them, and felt that now all would be well with them. Reaching his own horse, he tightened the cinches, leaped astride, and rode up to the level, where he faced north with a grim smile.

The afternoon had not far advanced. At a steady lope he covered the miles of forested ridge, down-hill and easy going until he descended into the brakes. Here his horse toiled for an hour, at last to crash out into the trail. One glance at the bare ground showed him that Marvie and Rose had not yet come so far. He preferred to reach the Ide ranch before them.

Five miles of travel, now slow, now swift, and then a hard climb took Nevada out of the brakes into the beautiful, stately forest, where the pines thinned and straggled to the desert sage.

The trail grew broad and sandy, so that his speeding horse thudded almost noiselessly on. Clumps of spruce and low branches of pines obscured the bends.

Nevada rode around an abrupt green curve almost to run down a horse coming toward him. He pulled his mount to a sliding halt. He heard a cry. The rider was a woman. Hettie Ide!

IT WAS two days before that secret drama in the forest that Ben Ide came out on the porch where Hettie was sitting. He spread his arms to the glorious beauty and color of the Arizona landscape.

"Hettie," he said, "I once thought Forlorn River in the fall was pretty close to heaven. But Cedar Springs Ranch has it beat a mile."

"It's very beautiful," replied Hettie. "If only everything were as fine as the weather, and the scenery!"

"Well, Tom Day says things must grow worse before they get better. Heigho! But I'm not lettin' disappointment sour me, anyhow."

"Disappointment? You mean—about ranching in Arizona?"

"Between you an' me, Hettie, I wasn't thinkin' of cattle at all," replied Ben sadly.

Hettie suffered a contraction of her heart. If Ben knew what she knew! She prayed that he never would.

"Hettie," Ben said, "do you still think of—of—him?"

"Always," she replied, quaking inwardly—if only she had the courage and the wit to keep her secret hidden!

"I'm afraid I've given up hope," went on Ben somberly. "An' it's taken the sap out of me."

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"Given up hope of what?" murmured Hettie.

"Of ever findin' Nevada," he replied, simply. "That's why I came to Arizona. Once, at Forlorn River, when I asked Nevada what he'd do if anythin' separated us, he said he'd go to Arizona an' take to hard ridin'. I never forgot. . . . Well, I reckon every cowboy on these ranges has hit me for a job. But sure not one of them was Nevada, nor had they ever heard of him. I reckon he's dead. Don't you ever think that, Hettie?"

"Yes. . . . Dead to us, surely," she returned, with dry lips.

"How could Nevada be dead to us if he were alive?" queried Ben, sharply. Then he lifted his head.

"I hear a horse . . . comin' lickety cut! Hello, it's Dillon! . . . Darn the luck. There's somethin' up."

HETTIE sustained a sharp quickening of her pulse. A horse and rider bobbed up over the bench. At the moment Ina came out of the house to begin some speech to Ben, which did not materialize. Ben strode off the porch to meet Dillon, who rode up like a whirlwind, scattering gravel all over the porch; and he leaped out of the saddle with the lithe grace of one to whom such action was habit.

"Mornin', Boss," he said, and tipped his sombrero to Hettie and Ina. "You're late. So I rode up."

"Bad news?" asked Ben.

"No, it ain't bad; but it's disturbin'. Cowboy just in from Tom Day's range. Name's Laskin. He rode a hoss to death gettin' here. I gave him another hoss, an' soon as he'd swallered some drink an' grub he rode off for Franklidge's ranch."

"Yes. Well, what was he ridin' so hard for?" queried Ben, as if prepared.

"Yesterday he was in camp near Silver Meadows," went on Dillon. "Another rider with him—whose name I didn't get. Some men rode down on them. Laskin said they wasn't drunk. Just keyed up over a big deal. They made no bones about the deal—at least their leader didn't. An' he was no other than Jim Lacy."

"Jim Lacy bobbed up again! Go on, Dillon."

"Lacy said he was goin' to rustle the stock at Silver Meadows, an' sent you his compliments. Pretty nerry, wasn't it?"

"Nerry? Yes; if it's true," retorted Ben. "But I don't believe it. Jim Lacy or anybody else would be a fool to tell such a plan, before pullin' it off."

"Reckon that seems so," replied the foreman, smoothly. "But sometimes these desperadoes like Lacy do queer things. It's not braggin'. Such men don't brag. It's just sort of a cool defiance of law—an' honest ranchin'. . . . Well, Lacy has twenty-four hours' start. There was a big bunch of cattle at Silver, so Laskin said. The last of your stock, an' some of Day's an' Franklidge's. We were figgerin' on a big round-up pronto. But we're too late, Boss."

"Too late! Why, man, if it is true, we can stop that drive before it gets down to the road," declared Ben.

"Stop nothin'. Lacy's outfit won't drive this way. They'll drive up over the Rim; and I'll gamble there's a bunch of five thousand head on the way now."

Ben sat down as if suddenly weighted. "If it's true, I'll—I'll run down this Jim Lacy an' jail him! I don't care what it costs," declared Ben. "But I reckon we're gettin' all riled-up over cowboy guessin'!"

"Give me a couple of days off, Boss?" asked Dillon, in strange eagerness. "I'll find out."

"No. Some of the rustlers will plug you; an' then I *would* be out of luck," replied Ben, decisively.

"But I want to go," declared Dillon, with the blood rising under the tan of his handsome face.

"I appreciate the risk you'd take for me, Dillon. But, no. I'm givin' you orders to take Raidy with six cowboys an' go to Silver Meadows. Hurry back to report. Then we'll see."

Dillon had difficulty in repressing some kind of agitation that did not owe its source to respect and regard for Ben Ide. What an intent, almost derisive glance he gave Ben! Then, without another word, he mounted and rode furiously down toward the corrals.

"Girls, did you hear all he had to say?" asked Ben, appealing for sympathy.

"We couldn't very well help it," replied Ina, putting a hand on Ben's shoulder. "Dear, I—I haven't confidence in this man Dillon."

"Huh! Nor in me either," retorted Ben, shaking her hand off.

That action hurt Ina's sensitive feelings, and she drew away haughtily.

"Very well, Ben Ide," she declared. "But when the crash comes don't you look to me for sympathy."

With that she went back into the house. Ben gazed helplessly up at his sister.

"There! Can you beat that? My own wife gone against me!"

THEN Marvie appeared, black in the face. Alas for Hettie! Her heart sank.

"Ben Ide, I've a bone to pick with you," he burst out.

"Pick away, you young rooster," returned Ben wearily, but he was interested. Marvie had never before bearded the lion in his den.

"Did Dillon tell you a cowboy named Laskin rode in with news about a cattle drive?"

"Sure he did."

"Ha! That's what he told Raidy. He's a liar!"

"Marvie, take care. You're no longer a kid. Would you say that to Dillon's face?"

"Would I? Huh. I *did*, an' I cussed him good," rejoined Marvie hotly. "Listen. I saw that cowboy. He wasn't no rider named Laskin. He was Cedar Hatt!"

"What?"

"Cedar Hatt, I tell you. I *know* him!"

"Marvie, you're not only loco, but you're always sore at Dillon. You'll go too far. Take care."

"Care, thunder!" shouted Marvie, beside himself with rage. "It's you who's loco!"

"Marvie Blaine, you're fired," replied Ben curtly. "You can't ride for me any more. Now, get out of my house an' go over to Hettie's, till I can decide what to do with you."

"Aw—Ben!" gasped Marvie.

"Don't 'aw-Ben' me," said Ben, furiously. "Get out of here now—you round-eyed, freckle-faced four-flush of a cowboy!"

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Marvie started as if he had been lashed. "Ben Ide, you'll be sorry for that," he declared solemnly, and stamped away.

Ben stared at the erect, retreating figure of the lad.

"Marvie too!" he said huskily.

Hettie felt something of a sneak herself, as she stole away, back to her own cabin, and the seclusion of her room. Was she not betraying Ben, herself, by withholding facts she alone knew? Yet how impossible to crush him utterly! Jim Lacy was Nevada! She would never have the courage to tell him that.

As for herself, the last hope had fled, the last doubt, the last shred of stubborn faith. Nevada was a rustler. He had fallen so low, so base, that he could steal from the friend who had once succored him. The thing was so vile that Hettie writhed under the shame of her seemingly indestructible love for this impostor Nevada, this fugitive horseman who had won her under another guise, this Jim Lacy, killer and thief. But though everything else seemed dead—hope, faith, interest in life, will to go on fighting—she knew her love survived. It was the very pulse of her heart.

A long hour she lay there on her bed, until collapse and tears came to her relief. And when again she rose to face herself in the mirror she shrank aghast. But there was her mother to live for, and poor blind Ben, who had loved this traitor Nevada, even as she.

TWO days went by, with the Ide household under considerable strain of uncertainty.

Raidy and Dillon, with their riders, returned on the third day. Raidy found Ben in the living-room.

"Howdy, Boss," he said, in greeting, and bowed quaintly to Hettie and Ina.

"Took you long enough. Where's Dillon?" replied Ben, gruffly. "Did he return with you?"

"Not exactly. He left us at daybreak this mornin', an' beat us in."

"Is he here now?"

"Sure. I told him he'd better come along with me. But he said he'd see you later. . . . Boss, Dillon is in purty bad humor. I never seen him like this. Black as thunder, an' sore as a kicked pup."

"That'd be natural for anyone who had my interests at heart, as Dillon has. But it's odd he didn't come to report. . . . Well, out with your bad news."

"I'm sorry, Ben. It couldn't be no wuss. You're rustled off the range. The last of your stock, except some stragglin' steers an' yearlin's, is gone—along with a thousand head of Tom Day's."

Ben Ide made a flashing, violent gesture, as if to strike. He paled. His eyes shot fire.

"They've cleaned me?" he demanded fiercely, as if still doubting.

"Yes, Boss. I made sure, because I wasn't trustin' Dillon to give a full report."

Hettie, standing back of Ina's chair, felt both hot and cold; and she stared at her brother fearfully, expecting him to break into an ungovernable rage. She had reckoned without her host, however, for, although Ben turned white to the lips, he suddenly became calm and cool.

"Ahuh. So your hunch has come true," he said, almost with sarcasm. "Wal, I



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reckon you'll get a lot of satisfaction crowin' over me an' Dillon. Give me the facts, short an' sweet!"

"Wal, Tom Day an' his riders were at Silver Meadows when we arrived. A sheep herder had tipped them off to the drive. We split up an' rode all around the Meadows. Only a few cattle left. Them rustlers made a slick job of it. Day an' Franklidge lost over a thousand head, an' you lost all you had left. A matter of three thousand head. We took the trail up the canyon. An', say, it was a bowl-varde clear to the Rim. . . . I was for trailin' the rustlers to a finish fight. But Day wouldn't let any of us go down in that hole. We'd have been ambushed, an' some of us killed. Besides, he said we could never have recovered the cattle. Once turned loose in that jungle of scrub oak, manzanita an' cactus, them cattle would have vamoosed like ticks shook off a leaf. So we turned back."

"You told Tom Day, of course, that Jim Lacy made this drive?" queried Ben.

"Tom knowed all about it from the sheep herder. Seems that Lacy sent Tom word he was goin' to make this big steal. Sent his respects to Tom an' Judge Franklidge, an' said he'd drop into Winthrop some day."

"By heaven, this Lacy is a cool one!"

"Cool? Wal, Boss, you might call Lacy thet; but I reckon he's a mixture of hell's-fire an' chain-lightnin'!"

"I'll hang him," said Ben, with deadly calm. "He's the leader of the Pine Tree Outfit."

"Wal, me an' Tom Day reckoned so. An' for once Dillon agreed with us," replied Raidy. "Tom said Lacy jest got tired of layin' low an' bein' mysterious. So he comes out in the open. I'll bet you he'll ride right into Winthrop."

"Raidy, I'm glad Lacy cleaned me out. I'm through waitin' around to see what's goin' to happen next. I've sent for Sheriff Macklin an' a posse. This mornin' I got word from Struthers, the Phoenix sheriff who's made it so hot for rustlers in southern Arizona. Struthers is in Winthrop at my request. They'll arrive here not later than to-morrow. I'll have Dillon get twenty-five of the hardest men he can gather. I'll offer ten thousand dollars reward for Jim Lacy, dead or alive. I'll spend every dollar I have to run down Lacy an' his Pine Tree gang!"

"Wal, Boss, you're talkin' high, wide, an' handsome," replied Raidy. "But it's not for me to offer opinions. This ranch—an' for that matter—this whole range ain't big enough for me an' your man Dillon. I just have to quit."

"Very well, Raidy. I'm sorry you see it that way," returned Ben, coldly, and with a wave of his hand terminated the interview.

HETTIE fled. As she ran out she heard Ina deliver a stinging rebuke to her husband. Then a door slammed. Hettie hurried home in a state of mind bordering on a breakdown.

"What's all the row over at Ben's?" her mother inquired placidly from her comfortable chair.

"Rustlers, cattle, foremen, sheriffs, and heaven only knows what," replied Hettie distractedly. "Mother, have you seen Marvie to-day?"

"Marvie went away yesterday, and

hasn't come back. At least, he didn't sleep in his bed."

"Oh dear! That wild boy! Here's more to—worry over. . . ."

Hettie went to her room, with the motive of indulging her grief. But sight of her riding boots acted powerfully upon her, and she decided to take a ride. Not for days had she been on her horse. Perhaps a long, hard ride would be good for her; and, moreover, she might meet Marvie on the trail. Could something have happened to him? It might very well have, Hettie concluded, with a tremor. He and Rose might have been discovered by that Cedar Hatt, of whom Rose had such great fear. The very air 'round the Ide ranch seemed congested, heavy, sultry, ominous with menace.

HETTIE passed the quarters of the riders at some distance, not caring to be accosted by Dillon or Raidy. She saw some saddled horses, dusty and tired, that had evidently just come in. There were a number of men bunched in a circle, conversing so earnestly that none espied her. Gaining the stables she found Pedro, and had him saddle her horse. Soon she was riding fast, with the wind in her face.

But neither a gallop nor a run sufficed to change Hettie's mood. She rode into the woods, and let her horse walk at will down the shady trail in the direction from which Marvie always returned.

And here, alone, under the impelling influence of the forest, Hettie realized that she was a most miserable and heartbroken girl, with a terrible sword hanging over her head. How hopeless her situation! What good to think? There was not a thought nor an action that could help her in her extremity.

A purple haze like smoke hung in the aisles of the forest; the only sound was the faintest of breezes murmuring in the pines; the thickets were on fire with golden and scarlet flame of autumn leaves; the westerling sun caught the glint of falling leaf and pine needle.

Nature seemed so pitiless this day. It went on—calm, sweet, beautiful, inscrutable, unmindful of the poor little lives of human beings. Hettie could not derive any solace, any strength from forest or range or desert. Arizona had killed her dream, as it had ruined her brother.

Suddenly she caught the rhythmic beat of swift hoofs ahead 'round a green curve of the trail. That must be Marvie's horse. A rush of relief swept over her. The pine boughs spread. A big black horse was upon her before she could pull a rein. She cried out. But the rider hauled the black on his haunches. And that rider was Nevada!

Hettie clutched the pommel of her saddle. An awful, stunning shock suspended, for an instant, all her faculties, and every sensibility except the physical instinct of holding her equilibrium. Then emotion burst the dam.

"You!" Hettie felt the word leave her stiff lips; but she heard it only as a whisper.

Nevada swept off his sombrero and bowed low, to the mane of his horse. And as he rose erect he remained bareheaded.

"Wal, shore it's Hettie Ide," he drawled, in the cool, leisurely, Southern accents that cut into her heart like blades.



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Then they gazed at each other, as if sight were trying to reconcile the face of dreams with the reality. The face Hettie looked into had the same lean outline, the dark blue-black shade of beard against the clear brown tan, the intent, light hazel-flecked eyes. But it did not have the soul with which her imagination and memory had invested it.

"I . . . saw you . . . in Winthrop," began Hettie, as if to find relief from oppression. Silence was impossible.

"Shore. I reckoned you might," he replied. As he spoke, he rolled a cigarette with steady fingers. No surprise, no emotion that Hettie could read, manifested itself in look or manner. "Too bad you had to run into me heah!"

"Too bad! . . . It's terrible! But I'm glad," exclaimed Hettie, quivering, shaking all over.

"Thank you; an' I'm shore sorry I cain't return the compliment," he said, and bent his head to light the cigarette.

His cool nonchalance, that she remembered so poignantly, seemed now to inflame her.

"Jim Lacy!" she cried, in scornful, sad haste to acquaint him with her knowledge of his infamy.

He thrust his sombrero on, tilted back, and his penetrating, inscrutable eyes studied her face.

"Why didn't you trust me? Oh, why?" she went on, slipping further toward an emotional outbreak.

"HETTIE, there was a time, long ago, when I'd rather have been daid than let you know I was Jim Lacy."

"You were ashamed?"

"I shore was."

"Long ago, you said. . . . Then you're not ashamed now?"

"Wal, it cain't matter now," he rejoined, with a gleam of a smile.

"Why can't it matter now?"

He made an expressive gesture, and then gazed down through the open forest to the colorful desert. His horse rubbed noses with Hettie's, and gradually backed it across the trail.

"Ben doesn't dream his . . . his old friend Nevada is you . . . the notorious Jim Lacy."

"I reckon not. . . . Too bad he's got to find out pretty soon!"

"Must Ben . . . find out?"

Nevada dropped his head. His horse, nosing Hettie's, brought Nevada closer to her, so that she might have touched him.

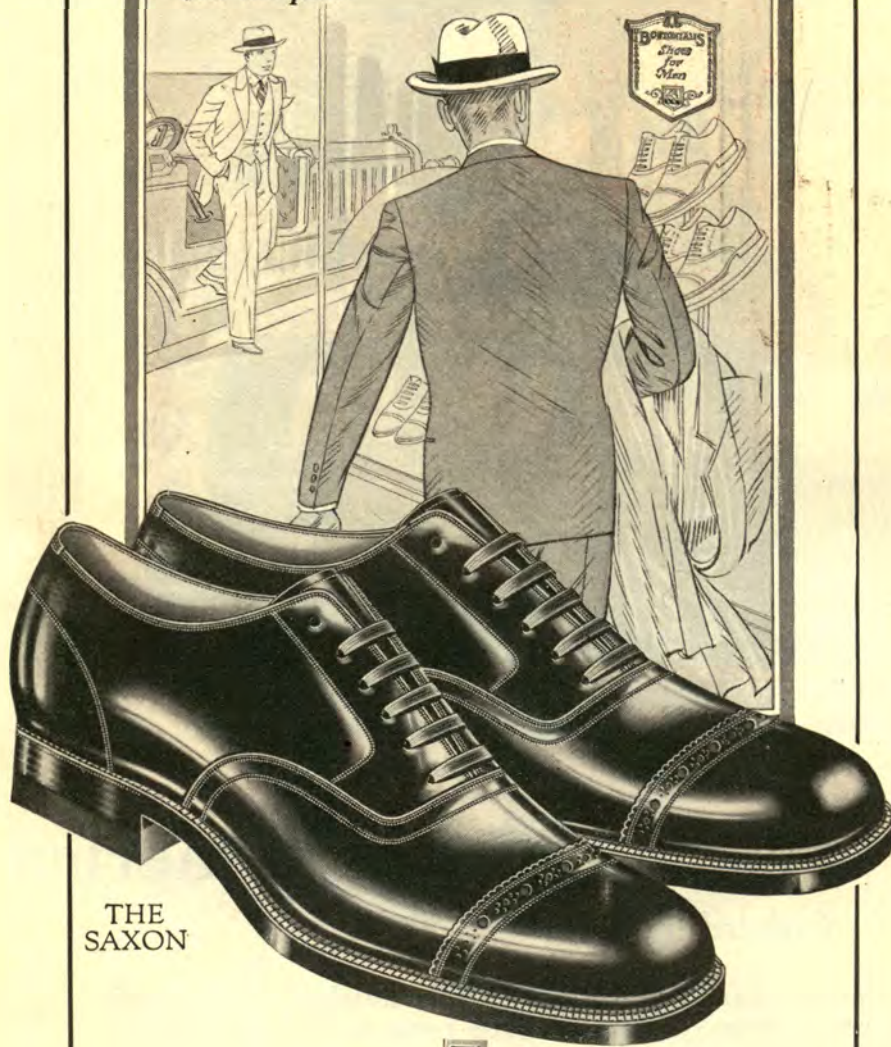
"How can you be so cool, so hatefully cool?" burst out Hettie. "Ben loved you. I—I— What did he care who you were? Why didn't you always stay Nevada? Ben left no stone unturned to locate you. Failing that, he came to Arizona, because he hoped you might turn up. . . . You have turned up. But as Jim Lacy—as a rustler who stole from him. Stole from a friend who once saved and succored and loved him! Did you not know those cattle were Ben's?"

"Shore—I did," replied Nevada.

"Oh, it was a dastardly thing to do!" cried Hettie, covering her face with her hands. "It will cut him to the quick. . . . And it will kill me!"

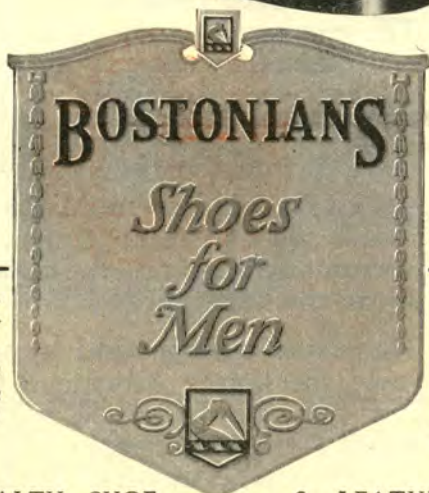
His silence, his imperturbability, in its unnaturalness, roused her to a sudden furious passion that burned away her tears and dyed her face scarlet.

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"Wal, you're a mighty healthy lady after so many years of dyin'," he drawled, tossing away his half-smoked cigarette. "Hettie, you always was pretty; but you've grown into a plumb handsome woman. . . . Reckon the cowboys are sweeter'n ever on you. Dillon now. *He* was. He's shore a handsome hombre. Devil with the women, I heah. . . . Why don't you marry him?"

"I . . . may yet," replied Hettie, somberly. He baffled her. In his cool, inscrutable presence she felt like a child. And a deep, unplumbed emotion seemed to swell at the gates of her self-control.

"Hettie, if you do, you'll be changin' your mind considerable from what it was that night at the dance in Winthrop."

"What do you know about that?"

"WAL, I happened to heah you tell Dillon a few things, an' I saw him try to get you in his arms."

"*You!* You were there?"

"Shore. An' after you founced off, I introduced myself to Dillon, an' invited him to draw. But he didn't have the nerve; so I took a punch at his handsome face."

"You struck Dillon on account of me!" murmured Hettie, softening.

"Wal, yes, partly. But I had it in for him before. . . . By the way, is he at the ranch?"

"Yes. I saw him, at the corrals as I came out."

"Good! I'm shore a lucky hombre—since I took up with Jim Lacy again."

"You were going to our ranch?" queried Hettie, quickly.

"I *am* goin', Miss Hettie Ide."

"What . . . for?"

"Wal, reckon my prime reason is to shoot out one of Dillon's handsome eyes. But I've another—"

"You'll—you'll *kill* him?"

Nevada's flashing eye and sweeping gesture were the first indications of passion he had evinced.

"Reckon if you hadn't held me up heah he'd be daid now. An' that stands for me, too."

"Ah! Then Dillon is a—a dangerous man—as you—"

"Hettie, he's a bad hombre. Come from New Mexico. Name is Ed Richardson, once with the Billy the Kid outfit. . . . I'll kill him, shore; but he might return the compliment."

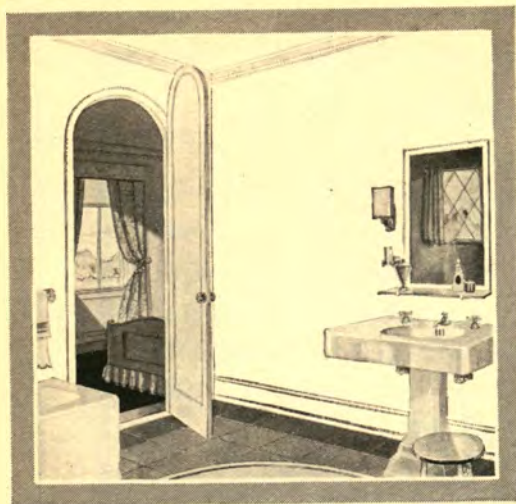
"Hush!" Hettie reined her horse closer, so that her stirrup locked with Nevada's. "Do not do this terrible deed. For Ben's sake, if not mine. Give up this outlaw, rustler, gunman life. . . . Take me away with you to some far country. I have money. You can start over again. I will cleave to you—live for you!"

"In heaven's name, Hettie Ide, are you crazy?"

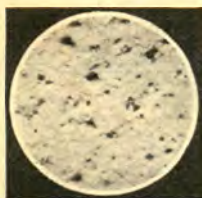
"Not yet. But I will be soon—if this goes on," she panted, and slipped her gloved hand to his shoulder. "Nevada, I—I still love you. I've always loved you. I don't care who you are—what you've been. All I ask is that you save Ben this horror; that you take me away and give up this life. . . . We can plan quickly. I will meet you at some point on the railroad. . . . Say you will!"

"No," he said hoarsely.

"Nevada! . . . Don't you love me—still?" And she leaned to him, overcome,



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betraying all her woman's soul of love and hope for him, for Ben, for herself. "Say you love me—say you'll take me!"

"Yes, I love you, mad woman! But I cain't accept your sacrifice. I cain't ruin you. . . . Good lord, Hettie, you forget I'm Jim Lacy!"

"It's because you *are* Jim Lacy!"

"Hettie, don't tempt me. I cain't—I won't!"

"You lie, then. You do not love me. You have taken some—other woman. You don't love me!"

Hettie saw him loom over her. She felt herself seized in iron arms and dragged from her horse. Then she was lifted over the pommel and crushed to his breast. He kissed her mouth, her cheeks, her eyes, her brow, her hair, and then again her mouth. (To be concluded)

FRAUDULENT or worthless stocks, "get-rich-quick" schemes, and the like, cost the people of America millions of hard-earned dollars every year. There are always unscrupulous or visionary "promoters" who live off the savings of the gullible. Inexperienced investors fall for the glib talk of the ruthless money hunters—and experienced investors sometimes fall for it, too. But if you will read "What to Do with Your Dollars After You Get 'Em" you will be less likely to make unsound investments. This article, to appear soon, is by an investment expert, a man who for long years has been chasing fake promoters out of the field. He tells you how some of the crooks operate, and gives you many rules to follow before you put your fountain pen and your check book into action.

I Cultivated a Sense of Humor

(Continued from page 19)

understanding. I was encouraged in this weakness by the circumstances of our lives. My parents were handsome, talented, and original. They attracted to themselves people of distinction. Writers, painters, editors, scientists, and teachers came to our house. I listened to them talk.

Unconsciously, I established my own little Bureau of Standards. And it never occurred to me that I was privileged; that, under other circumstances, I might have been one of the illiterate, ill-mannered, ignorant, poverty-stricken people who made up the "rest of the world." Yet, strangely enough, I was surrounded by this sort of people. They lived in the crowded flats and tenements of the city. They pressed against me in street cars and elevated trains. They waited on me in shops. I could escape them in my dreams; but in my waking hours they shared my world with me; it was theirs as well as mine.

Then something happened to postpone the awakening.

I had finished high school, had been graduated, wearing a high-necked "prin-