

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—Arriving at the lonely little railroad station of El Cajon, New Mexico, Madeline Hammond, New York girl, finds no one to meet her. While in the waiting room a drunken cowboy enters, asks if she is married, and departs, leaving her terrified. He returns with a priest, who goes through some sort of ceremony, and the cowboy forces her to say "Si." Asking her name and learning her identity the cowboy seems dazed. In a shooting scrape outside the room a Mexican is killed. The cowboy lets a girl, "Bonita," take his horse and escape, then conducts Madeline to Florence to Florence Kingsley, friend of her brother.

CHAPTER II.-Florence welcomes her, learns her story, and dismisses the cow-boy, Gene Stewart. Next day Alfred Hammond, Madeline's brother, takes Stewart to task. Madeline exonerates him of any wrong intent.

CHAPTER III.-Alfred, scion of a wealthy family, had been dismissed from his home because of his dissipation. Madeline sees that the West has re-deemed him. She meets Stillwell, Al's employer, typical western ranchman. Madeline learns Stewart has gone over the horder

CHAPTER IV.-Danny Mains, one of Stillwell's cowboys, has disappeared, with some of Stillwell's money. His friends link his name with the girl Bonita.

CHAPTER V

The Round-Up.

It was a crackling and roaring of are that awakened Madeline next morning, and the first thing she saw was a huge stone fireplace in which lay a bundle of blazing sticks. Some one had kindled a fire while she slept. For a moment the curious sensation of being lost returned to her. She just dimly remembered reaching the ranch and being taken into a huge house and a huge, dimly lighted room. And It seemed to her that she had gone to sleep at once, and had awakened without remembering how she had gotten to bed.

With a knock on the door and a cheerful greeting, Florence entered, carrying steaming hot water.

"Good mawnin', Miss Hammond. Hope you slept well. You sure were tired last night. I imagine you'll find this old ranch-house as cold as a barn. It'll warm up directly. Al's gone with the boys and Bill. We're to ride down on the range after a while when your comes Breakfast will ready soon, and after that we'll look about the place."

Madeline was charmed with the old Spanish house, and the more she saw of it the more she thought what a delightful home it could be made. All the doors opened into a courtyard, or patio, as Florence called it. The house was low, in the shape of a rectangle, and so immense in size that Madeline wondered if it had been a Spanish barracks. Florence led the way out on a porch and waved a hand at a vast, colored void. "That's what Bill likes," she said.

At first Madeline could not tell what was sky and what was land. The immensity of the scene stunned her faculties of conception. She sat down in one of the old rocking-chairs and looked and looked, and knew that she was not grasping the reality of what stretched wondrously before her.

'We're up at the edge of the foothills," Florence said. "It'll sure take you a little while to get used to being up high and seeing so much That's the secret-we're up high, the air is clear, and there's the whole bare world beneath us. Here-see that cloud of dust down in the valley? It's the round-up. The boys are there, and the cattle. Wait, I'll get the glasses."

"The round-up! I want to know all about it-to see it," declared Madeline. "Please tell me what it means, what it's for, and then take me down there."

"It'll sure open your eyes, Miss Hammond. I'm glad you care to know. Your brother would have made a big success in this cattle business if it hadn't been for crooked work by rival ranchers. He'll make it yet, in spite of them."

"Indeed he shall," replied Madeline. "But tell me, please, all about the round-up."

"Well, in the first place, every cattleman has to have a brand to identify his stock. Without it no cattleman, nor half a hundred cowboys, if he had so many, could ever recognize all the cattle in a big herd. There are no fences on our ranges. They are all open to everybody. Every year we have two big round-ups, but the boys do some branding all the year. A calf should be branded as soon as it's found. This is a safeguard against cattle-thieves. We don't have the rustling of herds and bunches of cat-

tle like we used to. "We have our big round-up in the fall, when there's plenty of grass and water, and all the riding-stock as well as the cattle are in fine shape. The cattlemen in the valley meet with their cowboys and drive in all the cattle they can find. Then they brand and cut out each man's herd and drive it toward home. Then they go on up or down the valley, make another camp, and drive in more cattle. It takes weeks."

For Madeline the morning hours flew

spent on the porch gazing out over that ever-changing vista. At noon a teamster drove up with her trunks. Then while Florence helped the Mexican woman get lunch Madeline unpacked part of her effects and got out things tor which she would have immediate need. After lunch she changed her dress for a riding-habit and, going out-

side, found Florence waiting with the horses. As Madeline rode along she made good use of her eyes. The soil was sandy and porous, and she understood why the rain and water from the few springs disappeared so quickly. What surprised her was the fact that, though she and Florence had seemed to be riding quite awhile, they had apparently not drawn any closer to

been traversed. Gradually black dots enlarged and assumed shape of cattle and horses moving round a great dusty patch. In another half-hour Madeline rode behind Florence to the outskirts of the

the round-up. The slope of the valley

was noticeable after some miles had



Gradually Black Dots Enlarged and Assumed Shape of Cattle and Horses Moving Around a Great Dusty Patch.

scene of action. A roar of tramping goofs filled her ears. The lines of marching cattle had merged into a great, moving herd half obscured by

The bawling and bellowing, the rackling of horns and pounding of soofs, the dusty whirl of cattle, and the flying cowboys disconcerted Madeine and frightened her a little.

"Look, Miss Hammond, there's Don Carlos!" said Florence. "Look at that plack horse!"

Madeline saw a dark-faced Mexican iding by. He was too far away for ier to distinguish his features, but he eminded her of an Italian brigand. He bestrode a magnificent horse.

Stillwell rode up to the girls then ind greeted them in his big voice. "Right in the thick of it, hey? Wal, het's sure fine. I'm glad to see, Miss Majesty, thet you ain't afraid of a ittle dust or smell of burnin' hide an'

nair." Madeline's brother joined the group, evidently in search of Stillwell. "Bili,

Nels just rode in," he said. "Good! Any news of Danny Mains?" "No. Nels said he lost the trail when he got on hard ground."

"Wal, wal. Say, Al, your sister is sure takin' to the round-up. An' the joys are gettin' wise. See thet sunof-a-gun Ambrose cuttin' capers all round. He'll sure do his prettiest. Ambrose is a ladies' man, he thinks."

The two men and Florence joined n a little pleasant teasing of Madefine, and drew her attention to what appeared to be really unnecessary feats of horsemanship all made in her vicinity. The cowboys evinced their interest in covert glances while recoiling a lasso or while passing to and fro. It was all too serious for Madeline to be amused at that moment. She did not care to talk. She sat her horse and watched.

CHAPTER VI

A Gift and a Purchase. For a week the scene of the roundup lay within riding-distance of the ranch-house, and Madeline passed most

of this time in the saddle, watching the strenuous labors of the vaqueros and cowboys. She overestimated her strength, and more than once had to be lifted from her horse. Stillwell's pleasure in her attendance gave place to concern. He tried to persuade her to stay away from the round-up, and Florence grew even more solicitous. Madeline, however, was not moved

by their entreaties. She grasped only dimly the truth of what it was she was learningsomething infinitely more than the

she was loath to lose an hour of her opportunity.

Before the week was out, however, Alfred found occasion to tell her that it would be wiser for her to let the round-up go without gracing it further with her presence. He said it laughingly; nevertheless, he was serious, And when Madeline turned to him in surprise he said, bluntly:

"I don't like the way Don Carios follows you around. Bill's afraid that Nels or Ambrose or one of the cowboys will take a fall out of the Mexican. They're itching for the chance. Of course, dear, it's absurd to you, but it's true."

Absurd it certainly was, yet it served to show Madeline how intensely occupled she had been with her own feetings, roused by the tumult and toil or the round-up. She recalled that Don Carlos had been presented to her, and that she had not liked his dark, striking face with its bold, prominent, glittering eyes and sinister lines; and she had not liked his suave, sweet, insinuating voice or his subtle manner, with its slow bows and gestures.

"Don Carlos has been after Fiorence for a long time." said Alfred. "He's not a young man by any means. He's fifty, Bill says; but you can seeoun tell a Mexican's age from and works. Don Carlos is well educated and a man'we know very little about Mexicans of his stamp don't regard women as we white men do. Now. my dear, beautiful sister from New York, I haven't much use for Don Carlos; but I don't want Nels or Ambrese to make a wild throw with a rope and pull the Don off his horse. So you had better ride up to the house and stay there."

"Alfred, you are joking, teasing me," said Madeline. "Indeed not," replied Alfred. "How

about It, Flo?" Florence replied that the cowbovs would upon the slightest provocation treat Don Carlos with less ceremony and gentleness than a roped steer. Old Bill Stillwell came up to be importuned by Alfred regarding the conduct of cowboys on occasion, and he not only corroborated the assertion, but added emphasis and evidence of his own.

"An', Miss Majesty," he concluded, "I reckon if Gene Stewart was ridin' fer me, thet grinnin' Greaser would hev hed a bump in the dust before now."

Madeline had been wavering between sobriety and laughter until Stillwell's mention of his ideal of cowboy chivalry decided in favor of the laughter. "I am not convinced, but I surren-

der," she said. "You have only some occult motive for driving me away. I am sure that handsome Don Carlos is being unjustly suspected. But as I have seen a little of cowboys' singular imagination and gallantry. I am rather inclined to fear their possibilities. So good-by."

Then she rode with Florence up the long, gray slope to the ranch-house. That night she suffered from excessive weariness, which she attributed more the strange working of her mind than to riding and sitting her horse. Morning, however, found her in no disposition to rest. It was not activity that she craved, or excitement, or pleasure. An unerring instinct, rising clear from the thronging sensations of the last few days, told her that she had missed something in life. Whatever this something was, she had baffling intimations of it, hopes that faded on the verge of realizations, haunting promises that were unfulfilled. Whatever it was, it had remained hidden and unknown at home, and here in the West it began to allure and drive her to discovery. Therefore she could not rest; she wanted to go and see; she was no longer chasing phantoms; it was a hunt for treasure that held aloof, as intangible as the substance of

Upon the morning after the end of the round-up, when she went out on the porch, her brother and Stillwell appeared to be arguing about the identity of a horse.

dreams.

"Wal, I reckon it's my old roan," said Stillwell, shading his eyes with his hand.

"Bill, if that isn't Stewart's horse my eyes are going back on me," replied Al. "It's not the color or shape—the distance is too far to judge by that. It's the motion-the swing.'

"Al, mebbe you're right. But they ain't no rider up on thet hoss. Flo, fetch my glass."

Florence went into the house, while Madeline tried to discover the object of attention. Presently far up the gray hollow along a foothill she saw dust, and then the dark, moving figure of a horse. She was watching when Florence returned with the glass. Bill took a long look, adjusted the glasses carefully, and tried again.

"Wal, I hate to admit my eyes are gettin' pore. But I guess I'll hev to, Thet's Gene Stewart's hoss, saddled. an' comin' at a fast clip without a rider. It's amazin' strange, an' some in keepin' with other things concernin' Gene."

"Give me the glass," said Al. "Yes, I was right. Bill, the horse is not frightened. He's coming steadily; he's got something on his mind."

The wide hollow sloping up into the foothills lay open to unobstructed view, and less than half a mile distant Madeline saw the riderless horse coming along the white trail at a rapid canter. A shrill, piercing whistle pealed

"Wal, he's seen us, thet's sure," said

Bill. The horse neared the corrals, disappeared into a lane, and then, breaking his gait again, thundered into the inclosure and pounded to a halt some twenty yards from where Stillwell waited for him.

One look at him at close range in the clear light of day was enough for by, with a goodly part of the time rounding up of cattle by cowboys, and over all horses, even the prize-winner,

White Stockings. The cowboy's great steed was no lithe, slender-bodied musstang. He was a charger, almost tremendous of build, with a black coat faintly mottled in gray, and it shone like polished glass in the sun. Evidently he had been carefully dressed down for this occasion, for there was no dust on him, nor a kink in his beautiful mane, nor a mark on his glossy hide.

"Come hyar, you son-of-a-gun," said Stillwell.

The horse dropped his head, snorted, and came obediently up. He was nei-ther shy nor wild. Unhooking the stirrups from the pommel, Stillwell let them fall and began to search the saidle for something which he evidently expected to find. Presently from some where among the trappings he produced a folded bit of paper, and after scrutinizing it handed it to Al.

"Addressed to you; an' I'll bet yet two bits I know what's in it." he said. Alfred unfolded the letter, read it, and then looked at Stillwell.

"Bill, you're a pretty good guesser. Gene's made for the border. He sert the horse by somebody, no names mentloned, and wants my sister to have

him if she will accept." "Any mention of Danny Mains?" asked the rancher.

"Not a word." "Thet's bad. Gene'd know about Danny if anybody did. But he's a close-mouthed cuss. So he's sure hittin' for Mexico. Wonder if Danny's goin', too? Wal, there's two of the

best cowmen I ever seen, gone to h-l, an' I'm sorry." With that he howed his head and grumbling to himself, went into the house. Alfred lifted the reins over the head of the horse and, leading him to Madeline, slipped the knot over her

arm and placed the letter in her hand. "Majesty, I'd accept the horse," he said. "Stewart is only a cowboy now, and as tough as any I've known. But he comes of a good family. He was a college man and a gentleman once. He went to the bad out here, like so many fellows go, like I nearly did. Then he had told me about his sister and mother. He cared a good deal for them. I think he has been a source of unhappiness to them. It was mostly when he was reminded of this in some way that he'd get drunk. I have always stuck to him, and I would do so yet if I had a chance. You read the letter, sister, and accept the horse."

In silence Madeline bent her gaze from her brother's face to the letter: "Friend Al: I'm sending my horse down to you because I'm going away and haven't the nerve to take him where he'd get hurt or fall into

strange hands. "If you think it's all right, why, give him to your sister with my respects. But if you don't like the idea, Al, or if she won't have him, then he's for you. I'm hoping your sister will take him. She'll be good to him, and she can afford to take care of him. And, while I'm waiting to be plugged by a Greaser bullet, if I happen to have a picture in mind of how she'll look upon my horse, why, man, it's not going to make any difference to you. She needn't ever know it.

"Between you and me, Al, don't let her or Flo ride alone over Don Carlos' way. If I had time I could tell you something about that slick Greaser. And tell your sister, if there's ever any reason for her to run away from anybody when she's up on that roan. just let her lean over and vell in his ear. She'll find herself riding the wind. So long.

"GENE STEWART." Madeline thoughtfully folded the



"How He Must Love His Horse!"

letter and murmured, "How he must love his horse!"

"Well, I should say so," replied Alfred. "Flo will tell you. She's the only person Gene ever let ride that horse. Well, sister mine, how about it-will you accept the horse?"

"Assuredly. And very happy indeed am I to get him. Al, you said, I think, that Mr. Stewart named him after me-saw my nickname in the New York paper?"

"Yes." "Well, I will not change his name. But, Al, how shall I ever climb up on him? He's taller than I am. What a giant of a horse! Oh, look at himhe's nosing my hand. I really believe he understood what I said. Al, did you ever see such a splendid head and such beautiful eyes? They are so large and dark and soft-and human. Madeline to award him a blue ribbon Oh, I am a fickle woman, for I am forgetting White Stockings."

"I'll gamble he'll make you forget any other horse," said Alfred. "You'll have to get on him from the porch." Madeline led the horse to and fro. and was delighted with his gentleness. She discovered that he did not need to be led. He came at her call, followed her like a pet dog, rubbed his black muzzle against her. Sometimes. at the turns in their walk, he lifted his head and with ears forward looked up the trail by which he had come. and beyond the foothills. He was looking over the range. Someone was calling to him, perhaps, from beyond

love of it. At supper-time Madeline was unusually thoughtful. Later, when they assembled on the porch to watch the sunset. Stillwell's humorous complainings inspired the inception of an idea which flashed up in her mind swift as lightning. And then by listening symmathetically she encouraged him to recite the troubles of a poor enttleman. They were many and long

the mountains. Madeline liked him

the better for that memory, and pitied

the wayward cowboy who had parted

with his only possession for very

and interesting, and rather numbing to the life of her inspired idea.

"Mr. Stillwell, could ranching here on a large scale, with up-to-date methods, be made-well, not profitable, exactly, but to pay-to run without loss?" she asked, determined to kill her new-born idea at birth or else give it breath and hope of life.

"Wal, I reckon it could," he replied, with a short laugh. "It'd sure be a money-maker. Why, with all my bad luck an' poor equipment I've lived pretty well an' paid my debts an' haven't lost any money except the original outlay. I reckon thet's sunk fer good."

"Would you sell-if someone would pay your price?"

"Miss Majesty, I'd jump at the chance. Yet somehow I'd hate to leave hyar. I'd jest be fool enough to go sink the money in another ranch." "Would Don Carlos and these other Mexicans sell?"

"They sure would. The Don has been after me fer years, wantin' to sell thet old rancho of his; an' these herders in the valley with their stray cattle, they'd fall daid at sight of a little money."

"Please tell me, Mr. Stillwell, exactly what you would do here if you had unlimited means?" went on Madeline.

"Good Lud!" ejaculated the rancher. "Wall, Miss Majesty, it jest makes my old heart warm up to think of such a thing. I dreamed a lot when I first come hyar. What would I do if I hed unlimited money? Listen. I'd buy out Don Carlos an' the Greasers. I'd give a job to every good cowman in this country. I'd make them prosper as I prospered myself. I'd buy all the good horses on the ranges. I'd fence twenty thousand acres of the best grazin'. I'd drill fer water in the mountains. I'd dam up that draw out there. A mile-long dam from hill to hill would give me a big lake, an' hevin' an eye fer beauty, I'd plant cottonwoods around it. I'd fill that lake full of fish. I'd put in the biggest field of alfalfa in the Southwest. I'd plant fruit-trees an' garden. I'd tear down them old corrals an' barns an' bunkhouses to build new ones. I'd make this old rancho some comfortable an' LEGION MEN ARE fine. I'd put in grass an' flowers all around an' bring young pine trees down from the mountains. An' when all thet was done I'd sit in my chair an' smoke an' watch the cattle stringin' in fer water an' stragglin' back into the valley. An' thet red sun out there wouldn't set on a happier man in the world than Bill Stillwell, last

of the old cattlemen." Madeline thanked the rancher, and then rather abruptly retired to her room, where she felt no restraint to hide the force of that wonderful idea. now full-grown and tenacious and alluring.

Upon the next day, late in the afternoon, she asked Alfred if it would be safe for her to ride out to the mesa.

"I'll go with you," he said gayly. "Dear fellow, I want to go alone." she replied.

"Ah!" Alfred exclaimed, suddenly serious. He gave her just a quick glance, then turned away. "Go ahead. I think it's safe. I'll make it safe by Louis Post Dispatch has been receivsitting here with mv glass and keeping an eye on you. Be careful coming down the trail. Let the horse pick his way. That's all."

She rode Majesty across the wide flat, up the zigzag trail, across the



Flat, Up the Zigzag Trail, Across the delays heretofore.

Beautiful Grassy Level to the Far Rim of the Mesa

beautiful grassy level to the far rim of the mesa, and not till then did she lift her eyes to face the southwest. In that darkening desert there was something illimitable. Madeline saw the hollow of a stupendous hand; she felt a mighty hold upon her heart. Out of the endless space, out of silence and desolation and mystery and age, came slow-changing colored shadows. phantoms of peace, and they whispered to Madeline. They whispered that it was a great, grim, immutable earth; that time was eternity; that life was fleeting. They whispered for her to be a woman; to love someone before it was too late; to love anyone, everyone; to realize the need of work, and thus find happiness.

She rode back across the mesa and down the trail, and, once more upon the flat, she called to the horse and made him run. His spirit seemed to race with hers. The wind of his speed blew her hair from its fastenings. When he thundered to a halt at the porch steps Madeline, breathless and

see the many business details of Her Majesty's Rancho and to keep a record of them. Madeline found the course of business training upon which ber father had insisted to be invaluable to her now. It helped her to assimilate and arrange the practical details of cattle-raising as put forth by the blunt Stillwell. She established an extensive vegetable farm, and she planted orchards. The climate was superior to that of California, and, with abundant water, trees and plants and gardens flourished and bloomed in a way wonderful to behold. Here in the farming section of the ranch Madeline found employment for the little colony of Mexicans. Their lives had been as hard and barren as the dry valley where they had lived. But as the valley had been transformed by the soft, rich touch of water, so their lives had been transformed by help and sympathy and work. The children were wretched no more, and many that had been blind could now see, and Madeline had become to them a new and blessed Virgin.

Madeline looked abroad over these lands and likened the change in them and those who lived by them to the change in her heart. It may have been fancy, but the sun seemed to be brighter, the sky bluer, the wind sweeter. Certain it was that the deep green of grass and garden was not fancy, nor the white and pink of blossom, nor the blaze and perfume of flower, nor the sheen of lake and the fluttering of new-born leaves. Where there had been monotonous gray there was now vivid and changing color. Formerly there had been silence both day and night: now during the sunny hours there was music. The whistle of prancing stallions pealed in from the grassy ridges. Innumerable birds had come and, like the northwardvalley. I'd pipe water down from the journeying ducks, they had tarried to stay. The song of meadow-lark and blackbird and robin, familiar to Madeline from childhood, mingled with the new and strange heart-throbbing song of the mocking-bird and the piercing blast of the desert eagle and the melancholy moan of the turtle-dove.

(To be continued).

RADIO BOOSTERS. The radio as a means of dissemination of information to American Legion posts and as a possible opportu-nity for Legion members to hear the utterances of the national officer is

growing in favor. One of the first occasions that the radio has been used by the Legion was in Lincoln, Neb., where National Commander Alvin Owsley's "key note" address was broadcast over the country, to be received by stations as far

away as the Atlantic coast. Future addresses by Commander Owsley may be heard in this manner. The Legion leader is to dedicate a new home for the Legion in Kansas City, Mo., on April 21, and arrangements have been made to have that address sent out by a powerful station of that city. Legionnaires in five States have

been asked to "stand by" their instru-

ments to hear this address. An invitation for broadcasting an address at St. Louis, Mo., through the station "KSD," operated by the St. ed. Commander Owsley is to dedicate the new Theodore Roosevelt High school on April 22 and may use the radio station on this visit. This station has been heard 400 miles south of the equator.

On the first visit of the Legion head to Detroit, he has been invited to use the well known "WWJ" station of the Detroit News as the means of addressing Legionnaires in that section. This s another of the country's most powerful stations.

Plans have been made by the committee in charge of the Memorial day celebration in San Francisco this year to have the address of Commander Owsley on that day relayed by radio

from a station there.
Several instances have been reported where State Legion organizations are using broadcasting stations as a method to reaching their membership and the general use of the radio by the American Legion is foretold by the installation of receiving sets in the Legion homes all over the country.

New Deal is Promised Veterans of World War.

A new deal for world war veterans who have been endeavoring to obtain vocational educational training and compensation from the veterans' bureau has been promised by Brigadier General Frank T. Hines, new director of the bureau.

Applications now pending will be divided into three classes with a view of getting prompt action for veterans She Rode Majestic Across the Wide who have become discouraged through