

# ROBBERS' ROOST

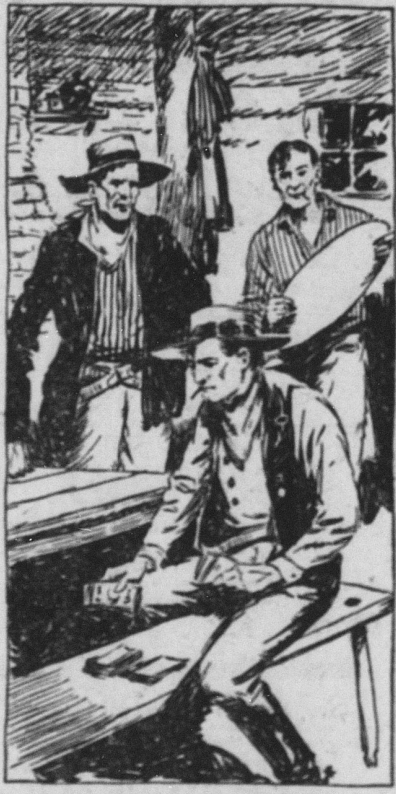
by ZANE GREY

SYNOPSIS

Jim Wall, young cowpuncher from Wyoming, seeks a new field in Utah. He meets Hank Hays, who tells him he is working for an Englishman, Herrick, who has located a big ranch in the mountains. Hays and others are plotting to steal their employer's cattle and money. With Hays and two other rustlers, Jim Wall goes to Herrick's ranch. Herrick announces that his sister, Helen, is coming to live with him. Hays unfolds his plan for getting possession of Herrick's 12,000 head of live stock. He and his lieutenants ride away to drive off the first bunch of cattle. Heeseman, Hays' rival among the cattle rustlers, tells Wall that Hays was once his (Heeseman's) partner and double-crossed him. Jim is sent to meet Miss Herrick. He tries to impress on her that he (Jim) is a desperado of the worst type, but the girl treats the information lightly.

CHAPTER V—Continued

Jim let Barnes take the team, while he crossed the bench and made his way down the steep, rocky declivity to Hays' cabin. Happy Jack was whistling about the fire, knocking pans and otherwise indicating the proximity of supper.



Straddling the Bench He Sat Down to Run Through the Bills.

"Howdy, Jack. What's tricks for today?" asked Jim.  
"Glad you're back, Jim," declared the cook, cordially. "Anyone'd have thought you was goin' to dish the outfit—judgin' from Hays. He's been like a hound on a leash. Smoky rode in today full of ginger, news, an' a roll of long green that'd have choked a cow. But even that didn't ease the boss."

"What ailed him, Jack?" inquired Jim, not without impatience.  
"Dinged if I know. It had to do with your goin' to Grand, a darned sight more than Smoky's."

Heavy footfalls outside attested to the return of Hays. Without more comment Jim stood up and away from the table, to face the door. Hays entered. He was not the genial Hays of other days, yet it was hard to define the change in him, unless it consisted in a gloomy, restless face behind his stride. Smoky followed him in, agreeable by contrast.

"Hullo, here you air. I waited at the barn," said Hays gruffly.  
"Howdy, boss. I took a short cut down," replied Jim.

"I seen Barnes an' had a word with him. So your trip come off all right? You shore made them blacks step."

"It wasn't as pleasant a drive as you'd imagine," returned Jim, darkly.  
"How! You must be one of them women-haters. . . . Outside of that side of it, what happened to far you?"

"Nothing to concern you or your outfit. Smoky saw me yesterday before I got a line on him. He ducked off the road. At Grand Junction nobody paid any more attention to me than I'd expect."

"Ahh, that's good," replied Hays, and going over to the pack beside his bed he rummaged about to return with a packet, which he slapped down upon the table.

"There you air, Jim. On our first deal. The packet unrolled and spread out—bills of large denomination.

"What's this for?" queried Jim.  
"Quick action. That's how we work. Your share. Smoky fetched it."

Jim did not care to give the impression that he was unused to this sort of thing. Straddling the bench he sat down to run through the bills.

"Five thousand six hundred," he said, as if to himself, and he slipped the money inside his pocket. "Much obliged, Smoky. Now I'll be able to sit in a little game of draw."

"Jim, ain't you got any news at all?" inquired Hays, searchingly. "A feller with your ears an' eyes shore would pick up somethin'."

"Miss Herrick fetched a Wells-Fargo package to her brother," rejoined Jim, slowly.

"Then it's come," said Hays, cracking his hands. "Herrick was expectin' money last stage."

After supper Smoky was the first to break silence:  
"Boss, now Wall is back you can make up your mind about what I'd like to do."

"Jim, listen to this: Smoky an' the other fellers, except Brad, want to make a clean sweep with this next drive. What you think?"

"Clean Herrick out?" asked Jim.  
"That's the idee."

Jim pondered a moment.  
"It'd be harder work, but save time, and perhaps our bacon as well. These cowboys are going to find out pretty soon that the cattle have thinned out. If Smoky drives a couple thousand more it'll be sure to be found out, sooner or later."

"See that, boss. Wall sees it just as I do. There's plenty of water along the road an' feed enough. . . . Let's make it one big drive."

to our first idee. You fellers make drive after drive, goin' slow. . . . thet'll give me time—"

"Ahh, So you'll risk goin' agin' the whole outfit," interrupted Smoky, with a curious gaze at his superior.  
"Wal, yes, if you put it that way," replied Hays, and he stalked out.

"Smoky, will you start the second drive tomorrow?" asked Wall.  
"I'll lay it up to my outfit. Wal, so long. See you soon, one way or another."

He went out. Jim heard a few sharp words pass between Smoky and Hays, and then silence.

Next day he went back to work on the new barn. A subtle change in Hank Hays augmented his suspicion of that individual. Jim let him alone.

Herrick was around as usual, interested in every detail of the building. Hays had gone off, with the cowboys across the valley to put them upon

some job there, which no doubt was a ruse to keep them away from Limestone Springs, where most of the stock grazed. And the day had ended without one glimpse of Helen Herrick.  
At breakfast the following morning Hays surprised Jim.  
"Was the Herrick girl out yesterday?" he inquired.  
"Didn't see her."  
"You didn't say what kind of a looker she was."  
"Oh, that," laughed Jim. "I forgot or didn't think you were interested."  
"Wal, I'd like to see her once before our deal's off here."

Hays had his wish fulfilled next day. He was at work on the new barn, on the far side from where Jim was occupied, when Miss Herrick came down with her brother. Jim stared as if his eyes deceived him. An English riding habit was known to him only from pictures. She looked queenly. Jim did not look at her face. Besides, he wanted most to see the effect upon Hank Hays. That worthy's hawklike head was erect, but Jim could not see the telltale eyes, Hays stood transfixed.

Herrick and his sister walked toward Jim's side of the barn.  
"Good morning," she said. "Bernie told me how you shot bob—no, jack rabbits—from the saddle. I want to see you do that. And I want to learn how. Will you show me?"

"I'd be pleased, Miss Herrick."  
"Tomorrow, then, you will ride with me?"  
"I'm at your service."

"Wall, you'll oblige me by riding with my sister when it suits her," said Herrick.  
"Yes, sir," returned Jim, gazing across at the statue-like Hays.

The couple moved off toward the open yard, where mounted cowboys were leading out saddled horses.  
"I seen her, Jim," Hays said, as if the event were epic. "She walked right by me."

"What if she did, Hank?"  
"Nothin'. What was she sayin' to you?"

"It seems Herrick told her about my shooting jacks from my horse, and she wants to see it done."  
"You're goin' ridin' with her? . . . The luck of some men!"  
"Hank, shall I tell Herrick you'll go in my stead?"  
"Nix, much as I'd like to. I can't hit jumpin' rabbits."

Hays hung around the barn, mostly idle, watching the valley, until the Herricks returned. The cowboys brought the horses down. Whereupon Hays abruptly left. And he did not come back. From that hour he became an elusive man.

That day ended Jim Wall's carpentry. On the next he was summoned early after breakfast to ride with the Herricks.

Under the stimulation of this girl's inspiring presence Jim gave an exhibition of swift and accurate shooting that surpassed any he had ever accomplished.

"Marvelous!" she exclaimed.  
"Helen, he's a bally good shot," declared Herrick.

That night Hank Hays evinced slight but unmistakable symptoms of jealousy, occasioned, perhaps, by Jim's report of killing thirteen out of fifteen bound-

ing jack rabbits. Happy Jack, wide-eyed and loud-voiced, acclaimed Jim's feat as one in a thousand.  
"Air you thet good frontin' a man who you know is swift?" drawled the robber chief.

Jim stared. "Hank, I'm not so good then," he replied, slowly.  
"Wal, somebody'll try you out one of these days," added Hays.

"I daresay," he rejoined, coolly, and sought his seclusion. He refused to let that linger in his mind. Something else haunted him. His slumber was troubled.

CHAPTER VI

Next day Herrick did not accompany his sister on the daily ride, a circumstance which, if anything, gave freer rein to her spirit. Jim had concern for her safety. He could not judge well of her horsemanship, because of the side-saddle she rode. Bluntly he disapproved of the atrocious thing and said it was worse than the "pancake" her brother rode. But she rode after the hounds just the same, and held her own until she was thrown.

If she had fallen upon rocks or even hard ground she would have been seriously injured, if not killed outright. But when the horse stumbled she hurtled over his head and hit in the sand. Jim was off almost the instant she struck, and he yelled for the cowboy.

"Water, Barnes," he called, as the cowboy dashed up.  
"There ain't none close," replied Barnes.

"I'm all—right," spoke up Miss Herrick, weakly. "I came—a cropper—didn't I?"

She sat, evidently not hurt, though she clung to Jim's arm. With his scarf he wiped the sand from her face, aware that his hand was not steady. Her hair had come partly loose to fall in a golden mass on her shoulder. She rearranged it and put on her hat, deftly despite gloved fingers.

"Help me up, please," she said.  
Jim placed a strong arm under hers and lifted her to her feet. Then something cold and tight within let go, and his reaction was to take refuge in anger: "Miss Herrick, I told you that saddle was no good. It's a wonder you were not killed."

"Oh, don't exaggerate. I've come many croppers cross-country riding at home."  
"Barnes, back me up in this," appealed Jim to the cowboy.

"Miss, he's tellin' you true," said Barnes, earnestly. "You was ridin' fast. If this hyar had been stony ground, like it is lots of places, you'd never knowed what hit you."

"I believe I did strike pretty hard," she admitted, ruefully.  
"You want a cow-saddle with a double cinch, and overalls," concluded Jim.

"Overalls!" she exclaimed, and she blushed rosy red. "You mean like these blue trousers Barnes has on?"

"Yes. Then you can ride. This is the West, Miss Herrick. You like to run a horse. It's dangerous. I shall have to speak to your brother."

"Don't. I've never ridden astride, but I'll do it, since you are so very fearful about it."

That experience left Jim shaky, probably a good deal shakier than it had left Miss Herrick. But it was not fear for her. Jim revealed in the torturing sensation engendered by contact with this beautiful girl. He shook like a leaf at the staggering realization that when she lay on the ground with her arms spread wide, her hair gold against the sand, he longed to snatch her to his breast. A natural impulse, under the circumstances, but for him—idiotic!

Miss Herrick took to the Western saddle like a duck to water. She could ride. Moreover, that spirit of which she had hinted certainly overtook her. More than once she ran off alone, riding like the wind; and upon one of these occasions it took the cowboys till dark to find her. That with Hank Hays and Heeseman there to see her gallop away unescorted! Herrick did not seem to mind.

As far as Jim Wall was concerned, however, these rides with her centered him upon the love which had come to consume him; and the several she took alone were more torturing because they aroused fear of Hank Hays. It could not be ascertained whether or not Hays followed her, but when the day came that Jim discovered Hays had been riding the trails frequented by Miss Herrick, it seemed time to act.

This placed Jim in a worse quandary. To act, for a man of his training at such a time and place, was to do only one thing. But how could he kill his leader upon mere suspicion of sinister intent to kidnap the girl? It was a predicament for a man who had always played fair, alike to honest friend and crooked ally.

Jim paced under his dark sheltering trees. In the dead of night, when he should have been sleeping. Days had passed without his once seeking to avoid disaster; and he had not sought because he knew it was of no use. To wish to be with his blond girl seemed irresistible. More than once he had caught himself in the spell of a daring impulse—to tell Miss Herrick that he loved her. The idea was sheer madness. Yet the thought persisted, and when he tried to shake it the result was it grew stronger in a haunting maddening way.

TO BE CONTINUED.

## Velvet Goes Everywhere This Fall

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



YOU are going stepping along boulevard and avenue in crisp golden sunlit autumn days? A round of calls to make about town? Perhaps afternoon tea with friends at the club? Wear tailored velvet.

You have a swanky new plaid wool, en daytime dress? Top it with a swagger coat and matching beret of velvet in black or a gorgeous hue.

You have a modish suit or ensemble of the loose woven nubby tweed the likes of which everybody is wanting this season? Give it a final touch of distinction with accessories of rich colored velvet—bag, belt, scarf and an Alpine hat in forest or pine green or the popular rust color.

You have accepted an invitation to dine and dance tonight? Wear regal velvet with stunning jewelry or glittering metal accents: You simply must own one of the scintillating silver mesh bag and triangle scarf sets such as the lovely young girl in the foreground of the illustration is so proudly wearing with her handsome velvet gown.

Of course the fall and winter wardrobe of the properly velvet-minded will include at least one de luxe velvet coat or evening wrap. The new three-quarter loose-from-the-shoulder coats of white velvet either self-colored or trimmed with brown fur are the latest.

Nor does the glory of velvet depart when the lights are out, for even when the woman of fashion retires she is supposed to dream sweet dreams in velvet. When we explain that the velvet which makes these perfectly lovely nightgowns is of the kind that actually washes as easily and as satisfactorily as your favorite muslins, batistes and nainsocks, velvet for "nightsies" becomes a practical as well as a fascinating theme.

As to the models illustrated, the spotlight is being thrown on just such practical about-town tailored velvet suits as the one pictured to the left in the picture. It is of black transparent velvet and has the new narrow straight skirt. The jacket could not be simpler and neater if it tried. The velvet-covered buttons are tres chic. A white and silver blouse with scarf, collar is worn with this tailleur. The velvet hat is a modish tricorn. Two rhinestone clips hold the face veil in place.

Centered above in this quartette of velvet fashions is a dinner suit. Velvet ensembles of this type are extremely voguish for semi-formal occasions. They carry that luxury look which is so indicative of dress-up modes this season. Observe, the skirt is floor length, which at once distinguishes it from the practical daytime velvet suit. The blouse top is of gold-striped velvet. It is new this fall to wear a formal hat with this type of costume. Chenille-dotted net and velvet fashions this stylish toque with its cunning veil.

The young woman wearing the four-strand pearl necklace with matching bracelet understands the art of dressing for she demonstrates that nothing so sets handsome jewelry off to perfection as black velvet fashioned as simply as possible. It has a high cowl neck in front, cut very low at the back. With this gown, to give it variation, comes a pair of long detachable white lace sleeves. Real jade and carnelian plaques clasp both necklace and bracelet.

Big corded balloon sleeves and a high neck slit down the back are the distinguishing features of the gown worn by the fortunate young woman possessing the silver-mesh bag and scarf.

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## Land Bedrock Foundation of Nation's Main Wealth

The historian, James Anthony Froude, in his great work on Caesar, says: "No form of property gives to its owners as much consequence as land." That, he said, was true in the past, is true in the present, and would continue to be true in the future.

It is well in these times to turn to this sober statement by one of the great students of recent days. Values in America have been based on land. That is the principal wealth in the country. Mortgage loans on land form the bedrock foundations of many insurance companies and banks. Land is a fixed asset. It is not liquid, and in a time of pressure it is not easily realizable. But this does not lessen the fundamental value. A good farm, even though the owner has a mortgage on it, is still a good farm. A vacant lot in an attractive suburb, even though no one wants it just now to build a house upon it, still remains as a potential site for a house. Neither the farm nor the lot will run away. That is the solid thing about land.

Political economists begin their books by saying that all wealth comes from the land. Each of us lives by its produce. The man in the city is as much dependent on the crops as is the farmer in the country. We have had a depression which has turned our measures of value topsyturvy, and some of our land has been thought to be of less worth than is really the case. Yet nothing that has happened in the markets of the world has altered the land itself. It is still our most valuable possession. —Cincinnati Enquirer.

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