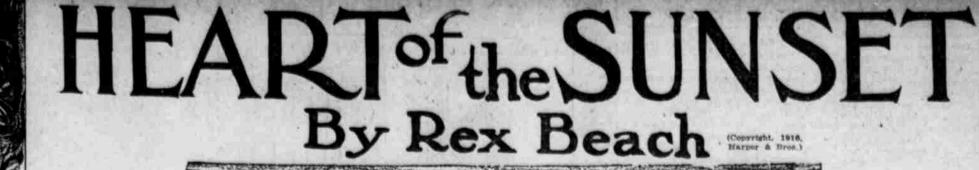
EVENING LEDGER-PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1916





CHAPTER I The Water Hole

to breeze played among the mes-bathen. The naked earth, where between the clumps of grass, plaster hard. It burned like and except for a panting lizard here, or a dust-grasy jack rabbit, on its covert, nothing animate in its covert, nothing animate in its nose. High and motionless ing sky a buzzard poised; long-ean crows among the thorny

a dry a businer pointed; long-an crows among the thorny ked and whistled, choked and red and grunted; a dove meelably, and out of the air the insect cries—the direction came as unascertainable as was hidden. the sun was half-way down

its glare remained untempered, installiging shade of the sparse more of a trial than a com lone woman who, refusing its vitation, piedded steadily over Stop, indeed, she dared not, her fatigue, regardless of the feet and limbs unused to walk-st, as she constantly assured

ep going until strength failed. ained sufficient reason to deny al apprehensions allowed herself nea. If she once allowed herself panicky, she knew, she would panicky, she knew, if ever an panicky, she knew, she would man far worse and now, if ever, det all her faculties. Somewhere orthward, perhaps a mile, perhaps distant, lay the water hole. country was a deadly and a

ameness, devoid of landmarks swell-defined watercourses. The mesquite with its first spring foll-obled a limitless peach orchard some careless and unbellevably and. Out of these false acres knolls and low stony hills lifted so that one came, now and then, points where the eye leaped for well-defined watercourses. across imperceptible valleys ar away that the scattered s so far were blended into an unbroken men. To the woman these outrested.

unutterably depressing, merely event the vastness of the deso-

of such a rise she paused and the country carefully, but withfrom her shoulder, only to find dry; the galvanized mouthplece ingers. With a little shock she that she had done this very eral times before, and her repeated rightsned her, since it seemed that her mind had been slightly formed.

the heat. That perhaps exwhy the distant horizon swam and ability a man situated as abo

have spoken aloud, in an enof the sort. Seating herself at shade she could find-it was ade at all-she closed her eyes no easy thing to do in such with drought, she opened her eyes again, only

she could make out nothing adoubtedly she was lost; the undentedly she was low, too might be anywhere. She listened of the very air seemed to listen. the leaves hushed their faint a nearby cactus held its forty salert, while others more distant the same harkening attitude. It the women that a thousand cars training with hers, yet no sound recently the monotohous crescendo sinuendo of those locust cries com-t of nowhere and retreating into the it lost as if satisfied, the leaves

would have flung herself full length upon the edge, but the man stepped forward and stayed her, then placed a tincup in her hand. She mumbled momething in answer to his greeting and the hoarse, raven-like croak in her voice startied her: then she drank, with trembling eagerness, drenching the front of her dress. The water was warm, but it was clean and delicious.

"Easy now. Take your time," said the man, as he refilled the cup. "It won't give

out." She knelt and wet her face and neck: the sensation was so grateful that she was tempted to fing herself bodily into the pool. The man was still talking, but she took no heed of what he said. Then at last she sank back, her feet curied under her, her body sagaing, her head decoming. She felt sank back, her feet curled under her, her hody sagging, her head drooping. She feit the stranger's hands beneath her arms, feit herself lifted to a more comfortable posi-tion. Without asking permission, the stranger unlaced first one, then the other of her dusty boots, seeming not to motice her weak attempt at resistance. Once he had placed her bare feet in the water, ene forgot her resentment in the intense re-

lief. The man left her seated in a collapsed, semiconscious state, and went back to his fire. For some time she was too tired to do more than refili the drinking cup occa-sionally, or to wet her face and arms, but as her pores drank greedily her exhaustion lessened and her vitality returned. It was dark when for the first time she turned her head toward the camp fire and stared curiously at the figure there. The appetizing odor of broijing bacon had drawn her attention, and as if no move went unnoticed the man said, without lifting his eyee:

eyes: "Let 'em soak! Supper'll be ready directly. How'd you like your eggs-if we had any?"

Evidently he expected no reply, for after a dhuckle he began to whistle softly, in a peculiarly clear and liquid tone, almost like some bird call. He had spoken with an unmistakable Texas drawl; the woman but blue down et exas drawl; the woman put him down at once for a cowboy. She settled her back against a boulder and

The pool had become black and mysterithe pool and become black and mysteri-ous, the sky was studded with stars when he called her, and she laboriously drew on hor stockings and boots. Well back from the fire he had arranged a seat for her, using a saddle blanket for a covering, and upon this she lowered herself stiffly. As she did so she took fuller notice of the man, and found his appearance reassur-ing. ing.

"I suppose you wonder how I-happen be here," she said.

to be here," she said. "Now don't talk 'til you're rested, miss. This coffee is strong enough to walk on its hands, and I reckon about two cups of it'il rastle you into shape." As she raised the tin mug to her lips he waved a hand and smiled. "Drink hearty!" He set a plate of bread and bacon in her lap, then opened a glass jar of jam. "Here's the dulces. I've got a sort of sweet tooth in my head. I reckon you'll have to make out with this, 'cause I rode in too late to rustle any fresh meat, and the delivery

out with this, 'cause I rode in too late to rustle any fresh meat, and the delivery wagon won't be 'round before morning." So saying, he withdrew to the fire. The woman ate and drank slowly. She was too tired to be hungry, and meanwhile the young man squatted upon his heels and watched her through the smoke from a husk cigarette. It was perhaps fortunate for her peace of mind that she could not correctly interpret his expression, for had she been able to do so she would have realized something of the turnoil into which her presence had thrown him. He was her presence had thrown him. He was accustomed to meeting men in unexpected places—even in the desert's isolation—but to have a night camp in the chaparral infoot-sore goddess stumble out to have a lot-sore goddess stumple out of the dark and collapse into his arms, was a unique experience and one calculated to disturb a person of his solitary habits. "Have you had your supper?" she finally inquired. inquired. "Who, me? Oh. I'll eat with the help." He smiled, and when his flashing teeth showed white against his leathery tan the woman decided he was not at all bad-looking. He was very tall and guite lean, with the long legs of a horseman-this lat-ter feature accentuated by his high-heeled boots and by the short canvas cowboy coat that reached only to his cartridge belt. His features she could not well make out, for the fire was little more than a bed of coals, and he fed it, Indian-like, with Mexican, and day before yesterday he killed a man over in Jim Wells County. They got me by phone at Hebbronville and told me he'd left. He's headin' for the border, and



was decidedly the strongest impression he gave. And yet in his face there was noth-ing animal in a bad sense. Certainly it showed no grossness. The man was wild, untamed, rather than sensual, and despite bis careless use of the plains vernacular he seemed to be rather above the average in education and intelligence. At any rate he seemed to be rather above the average in education and intelligence. At any rate, without being stupidly tongue-tied, he knew enough to remain silent whon there was nothing to say, and that was a blessing, for Mrs. Austin herself was not talkative, and idle chatter distressed her. On the whole, when Alaire had finished her analysis she rather meanted the good

her analysis she rather resented the good impression Law had made upon her, for on general principles she chose to dislike and distruct men. Rising, she walked pain-fully to the pond and made a leisurely tollet.

Breakfast was ready when she returned. and once more the man sat upon his heels and smoked while she ats. Alaire could not catch his eyes upon her, except when he spoke, at which time his game was direct and open; yet never did she feel free from his interast

his intensest observation. After's while she remarked: "I'm glad to see a Ranger in this county. There has been a lot of stealing down our way. and the association men can't seem to stop

and the association men can't seem to stop it. Ferhaps you can." "The Rangers have a reputation in that line." he admitted. "Hut there is stealing all up and down the border since the war. You lost any stuff?" "Yea. Mostly horses." "Sure! They need horses in Mexico." "They appende according of They.

"The ranchers have organized. They have formed a sort of vigilance committee in each town, and talk of using bloodhounds."

"Bloodhounds ain't any good, outside of novels. If beef got scarce, them greasers would steal the dogs and eat 'em." He added, meditatively, "Dog ain't bad eatin', either." either.

"Have you tried it?" Mr. Law nodded. "It was better than some of the army beef we got in the Philtp-pines." Then, in answer to her unspoken inquiry, "Yes'm, I served an enlistment there " there

"You-were a private soldier?" "Yes'm."

Mra Austin was incredulous, and yet she ould not well express her surprise without oo personal an implication. "I can't imtoo personal an implication. agine anybody-that is, a man like you, as ommon soldier." Well, I wasn't exactly that," he grinned

"No. I was about the most uncommon sol-dier out there. I had a speakin' acquaint-ance with most of the guardhouses in the islands before I got through." "But why did you enlist—a man like

vou?" "Why?" He pondered the question. "I was young. I guess I needed the excita-ment. I have to get about so much or I don't enjoy my food." "Did you holn the Maderlatas for excita-

"Did you join the Maderistas for excite ment?

Mostly. Then, too. I believed Panchito Madero was honest and would give the peone land. An honest Mexican is worth peons land. An honest Mexican is worth fightin' for anywhere. The pelados are still struggling for their land—for that and a chance to live and work and be happy." Mrs. Austin stirred impatiently. "They are fighting because they are told to fight. There is no patriotism in them," said she. "I think." he said, with grave deliberate-ness, "the majority feel something big and works and negative feels something big and

vague and powerful stirring inside them. They don't know exactly what it is, per-haps, but it is there. Mexico has outgrown her dictators. They have been overthrown

by the same causes that brought on the French Revolution." "The French Revolution !" Alaire leaned

his honor and her utter dependence him awoke his deepest chivairy. They the knowledge that her life was unit

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has made the Mazican what he is." Certainly this was an amazing speech to issue from a sun-browned cowboy sit-ting crosslegged under a mesquite tree. From under her hat brim Ahaire Austin cycd the speaker with a curiosity into which there had come a vague hostility. For the moment she was suspicious and piqued, but Law did not appear to notice, and as he talked on her doubts gradually subsided. subsided.

and as he talked on her doubts gradually subsided. "You said, hast night, that you were born on the other side?" She inclined her ruddy head to the west. "Yee'm. My father was a mining man, and he done well over there until he locked horns with the Guadalupes. Old Don En-rique and him had a run-in at the finish, over some land or something. It was when the don was gobbling all the property in the State and laying the foundation for his big fortune. You know he had per-mission from the Fresident to steal all the band he cared to, just like the rest of those local governors had. Well, Guadalupe tried to run my people cut." "Did he succeed?" "No'm. He killed 'em, but they stayed." "Not-really?" The listener was shocked. "Anot-real itsens, too?" "Times wasn't much different then than now. There's plenty of good Americans been killed in Maxico and nothing done about it, even in our day. I don't know all the detalis-never could get 'em, either -for I was away at school; but after I came back from the Philippines the Ma-dero fuss was just brewing, so I went over and joned it. But it didn't last long, and

forward, eying the speaker with startled intensity. "You don't taik like a-like an enlisted man. What do you know about the French Revolution?"

At last, as if mattened, the leaves to whisper softly again. It is her left lay the yellow flood of a Grands, but the woman, though it to swing in that direction, knew than to yield. At least twenty miles rems lay between, and she told her-at the could never cover such a dis-No, the water hole was nearer; it before it band. If she could only as at hand. If she could only e close at hand. If she could only little more clearly, she could locate o more she tried, as she had tried imas before, to recall the exact point the had shot her horse, and to map mind's eye the foot-weary course she availed from that point onward. If iravel was nothing new to her, ad failing anothing new to her,

t travel was nothing new to her, and fatigue were old acquaintances, could not help wondering if. in her training, in spite of that in-these of direction which she had arealf upon sharing with the wild a she were fated to become a victim traparral. The possibility was re-math at this moment seemed as far would find the water hole some-the unexpected would happen, as a did when one was in dire straits. I the young and too strong to die

the young and too strong to die was not so easily won as this. she readjusted the strap of the str bag over her shoulder and the side beit at her hip, then set her form the slone

wn the slope. Ingeringly. The sun gradually lity, but a partial relief from

unity, but a partial relief from sorily emphasized the traveler's muscular distress. Onward she the second state of the second state is a stricture of the second state and the signs correctly. The found were old, for the most they led in no particular direc-are uniting into anything like a wondered if she could bring her-net the blood of a jack rabbit, round quench her thirst. But the as repellent, and, besides, she stoder any relief, since it was coming into bloom, and as yet ut.

s frown red and huge when a hard-baked dirt she dis-boofprints. These seemed to line in which she was travels line in which she was travel-followed them gladly, encour-ey were foined by others, for, y meandered almiessly, they thing more like a trail than had as yet soen. Guessing at a direction, she hurried on, y into a region where the soil and searcely served to cover stratum. A low bluff rose on a slong its crest scattered ters were raggedly slibouetted ay.

a well-defined path now ; she a well-defined path now : she but har legs were heavy ; she reat deal, and her breath made vering sounds as it issued from Rounding the steep shoulder the hastened down a deolivity of sourb caks and ebony trees, staring ahead of her. news of the stony arroyo, the stunted thickets, were softened of wilight; the air had sud-overhead the empty, flawless tening wittly from the to

verhead the empty, flawiess ning swiftly from blue to yearral had awakened and the sounds of life. a shallow, flinty bowl was , and on its brink a little

dor of greasewood and as sharp. A man, ristes at the first sound, was

"T beg your pardon. I'm selfish." She extended her cup and plate as an invitation for him to share their contents. "Please eat with me."

But he refused. "I ain't hungry," he ffirmed. "Honest !"

Accustomed as she was to the diffidence of ranch hands, she refrained from urging him, and proceeded with her repast. When she had finished she lay back and watched

"My horse fell crossing the Arroyo Grande," she announced, abruptly. "H broke a leg, and I had to shoch him." "Is there any water in the Grands"

asked the man. "No. They told me there was plenty. knew of this charco, so I made for it." "Who told you there was water in the

fight near there." "You were a Maderista?" "Yes'm. Machine-gun man. That's a fine country over there. Seems like God Al-mighty got mized up and put the Mexicans on the wrong side of the Rio Grande. But I reckon you haven't seen much of La Feria since the last revolution broke out." "No. We have tried to remain neutral, but..." Again she hesitated. "Mr. Austin has ensmiss. Fortunately, both sides have spared La Feria." Law shrugged his broad shoulders. "Oh. AFFOYO 7" so Mexicans at the little goat ranch."

"Ball. So you walked in from Arroyo Grande. Lord! It's a good ten miles straightaway, and I reckon you came crooked. Eh?" "Yes. And it was very hot. I was never

here but once, and—the country looks dif-ferent when you're afoot." "It certainly does," the man nodded. Then

"It certainly does," the man nodded. Then he continued, musingly: "No water there, eh? I figured there might be a little." The fact appeared to please him, for he nodded again as he went on with his meal. "Not much rain down here, I reckon." "Very little. Where are you from?" "Me? Hebbronville. My name is Law." "Evidently, thought the woman, this fellow belonged to the East outfit, or some of the other big cattle ranches in the Hebbronville district. Probably he was a range boss or a foreman. After a time she said, "I suppose the nearest ranch is that Balli place?" "Yes'm."

acc?" "Yas'm." "I'd like to borrow your harse." Mr. Law stared into his plate. "Well, lise, I'm sfraid..." She added, hastly, "Til send you a fresh She added, hastly, "Til send you a fresh

Bie added, hastily, "Til send you a fresh one by Eall's boy in the morning." He looked up at her from under the brim of his hat. "Dyou reckon you could find that goat ranch by stariight, miss?" The woman was silent. "Alis't you just about caught up on traveling, for one day?" he asked. "I reckon you need a good rest about as much as anybody I ever saw. You can have my blankst, you know." The prospect was unwelcome, yet she re-juctantly agreed. "Perhaps-- Then in the morning-"

shook his head. "I can't loan ne, miss. I've got to stay right h y horse, miss. I've got to stay right here. "But Balli's hoy could bring him back." "I got to meet a man."

"Yes'm." "When will he come?" "He ought to be here at early dark to arrow evoning." Headless of her dismay a continued. "Yes'm, about sundown." continued. "Yes'm, about sundown." "But-1 can't stay here. I'll ride to "But-1 can't stay here. I'll ride to



Without a word he raised his right hand and cuffed the Mexican to his knees.

he's due here about sundown, now that Ar-royo Grande's dry. I was almin' to let you ride his horse."

ride his horse." "Then—you're an officer?" "Yes'm. Ranger. So you see I can't help you to get home till my man comes. Do you live around here?" The speaker looked

inquiringly, and after an instant's heat-tion the woman said, quietly: "I am Mrs. Austin." She was grateful r the gloom that hid her face. "I rode it this way to examine a tract of grazing

It seemed fully a minute before the Rang

er answered. Then he said in a casual tone, "I reckon Las Palmas is quite a ranch, ma'am."

"Yes. But we need more pasture." "I know your La Feria ranch, too. I was with General Castro when we had that

Law shrugged his broad shoulders. "Oh, well, the revolution isn't over! A ranch in Mexico is my idea of a bad investment." He rose, and, taking his blanket, sought a favorable spot upon which to spread it. Then he helped Mrs. Austin to her fest— her muscles has stiffened until she could barely stand—after which he fetched his saddle for a pillow. He made no apologies for his meager hospitality, nor did his guest expect any.

fight near there."

"My man might come earlier than I ex-ect," Mr. Law persisted. "Really, I can't see what difference it thrilling. Tales of her pale beauty were "Really, I can't see what difference it would make. It wouldn't interfere with your appointment to let me—" Law smiled slowly, and, setting his plate

common and not tame, but she was all and more than she had been described. And yet why had no one told him she aside, selected a fresh cigarette. Then as he reached for a coal he explained: "I haven't got what you'd exactly call an appointment. This feller I'm expectin[§] is a was so young? This woman's youth and attractiveness amazed him; he felt that he had made a startling discovery. Was she

so cold, after all, or was she merely re-served? Red hair above a pure white face; a woman's form wrapped in his blanket; ripe red lips caressing the rim of his mean drinking cup! Those were things to think about. Those were pictures for a lonely man.

a lonely man. Following his first amazement at be-holding her had come a fantastic ex-planation of her presence—for a moment or two it had seemed as if the fates had taken heed of his yearnings and had sent her to him out of the dusk-wild fancies her to him out of the dusk—wild fancies, like these, bother men who are much alone. Of course he had not dreamed that she was the mistress of Las Palmas. That altered matters, and yet—they were to spend a long idle day together. If the Mexican did not come, another night like this would follow, and she was virtually his prisoner. Perhaps, after all— Dave Law stirred nervously and sighed.

Dave Law stirred nervously and sighed. "Don't this beat hell?" he murmured.

CHAPTER II The Ambush

ALAIRE AUSTIN slept badly. The day's hardships had left their traces. The

I hardenips had left their traces. The toxins of fatigue not only poisoned har muscless with aches and pains, but drugged her brain and rendered the night a long succession of tortures. during which she experienced for a second time the agonies of thirst and fatigue and despair. Extreme physical ordeals, like profound emotional uphcavals, leave imprints upon the brain, and while the body may recover quickly, it often requires considerable time to rest exhausted nerves. The finer the nervous organism, the slower is the process of re-

exhausted nerves. The finer the nervous organism, the slower is the process of re-cuperation. Like most normal women, Alaire had a surprising smouth of endur-ance, both nervous and muscular, but, hav-ing drawn heavily against her reserve force, she paid the penalty. During the early hours of the night she slept hardly at all, and as soon as her bodily discomfort began to decrease her mind became unruly. Twice she ross and limped to the water hele for a drink, and it was not until nearly dawn that she dropped off into com-plete unconsciousness. She was awakened by a sunbeam which pierced her lasfy shel-ter and with hot touch explored her upter and with hot touch explored her turned face. up

addit for a pinow hality, nor did his guest expect any. When he had staked out his horse for the night he returned to find the woman rolled snugly in her covering, as in a cocoon. The dying embers flickered into fiame and lit her hair redy. She had taid off her feit Stetson, and one loosened braid tay over her hard pillow. Thinking her asleen, Law stood motionless, making no attempt to hide his expression of wonderment until, unex-pectedly, she spoke. "What will you. The said. "Well, ma'aro, I reckon I'll hide you out in the brush till I tame him. I hope you sleep well." "Thank you. I'm used to the open." He nodded as if he well know that she was: then, shaking out his slicker, turned away. ter and with hot touch explored her up-turned face. It was still early; the sun had just cleared the valley's rim and the ground was damp with dew. Somewhere near by an unfamiliar bird was sweatly trilling. Alaire listened dreamily until the bird carcl changed to the air of a familiar cowboy song, then she sat up, queerly startled. David Law was waisring his horse, grooming the animal meanwhile with a bur-lap cloth. Such attention was unusual in a stock country where horses run wild, but this horse. Mrs. Austin saw, justified un-usual care. If was a beautiful blood-bay mare, and as the woman looked it lifted its bead, then with wet, trenobling muzzle carcased its owner's check. Undoubledly this attention was meant for a kins, and was as daintily conforred as any woman's favor. It brought a reward in a jump of rugar. There followed an exhibition of couins delight; the mare's lips twitched her nose winkies in head as the presenway. As he hay staring out his intest, thread pesquite branches that roofed him in-dequitely from the dew hs marveled nightily. A bright, steady-burning star pesped through the leaves at him, and as a watched it he remembered that this watched it he remembered that the est haired woman with the still, whits face was known far and wide through the lower calley as "The Lone Strar." Well, he nused, the name fitted her; she was if sports were true, quite as mysterious, uits as cold and fixed and unapproach-ble, as the title implied. Knowledge of

The Ranger smiled pleasantly. "She's a easy as a rockin'-chair. We're kind of as easy as a rockin'-chair. sweethearts. Ain't we kid?" Again Bessie Belle tossed her head high. "That's 'yes,' with the reverse English," the speaker ex-plained. "Now you just rest yourself, na'am, and order your breakfast. What'll

be-quail, dove, or cottontail?" "Why-whatever you can get." "That ain't the kind of restaurant we run

"And you with a sweet tooth!"

a quail?

was some calaboose, now, wasn't it?" A moment later he inquired, ingenuously, "I don't suppose you ever saw that Bastille, did you?" Bessie Belle would sure be offended if she understood you. Ever see anybody call 'No. Only the place where it stood."

"Can it really be done?" "Sho'! You must have traveled right mart for such a young lady." He beamed "Sho'

Law's face brightened. "You wait." He led his mare down the arroyo, then reumlably upon her. He ied his mare down the arroyo, then re-turned, and, taking his Winchester from its scabbard, explained: "There's a pair of 'top-note' on that side hill waitin' for a drink. Watch 'em run into my lap when I give the distress signal of our secret order." He skirted the water hole, and seated himself with his heels together and big athese prepared upon his spread know "I was educated abroad, and I only cam tome-to be married." Law noted the lifeless way in which she spoke, and he understood. hablar those French and German lingues like a native," he ventured. "Beats me how a person can do it." scated himself with his heels together and his elbows propped upon his spread knees in the military position for close shooting. From where he sat he commanded an un-obstructed view of the thicket's edge. Next he moistened his lips and uttered an in-describable low whistle. At intervals he repeated the call, while the woman looked "You speak Spaniah, don't you?" "Oh, yes. But I was born in Mexico, as near as I can make out." "And you probably speak some Filipino dialects?" "Yes'm, a few." There was something winning about this young man's modesty, and something flat-tering in his respectful admiration. He seemed, also, to know his place, a fact which was even more in his favor. Un-doubtedly he had force and ability; prob-his his love of advanture and a bility; probon with interest. Suddenly out of the grass burst a blue quall, running with wings out-stretched and every feather ruffled angrily. It paused, the man's checks snuggled against the stock of his gun, and the bark of the thirty-thirty sounded loudly. Mrs. Austin saw that he had shot the little bird's ably his love of adventure and a happy lack of settled purpose had led him to neglect his more commonplace opportunities and head off. She spoke, but he stilled her with a gesture, threw in a second shell, and re-peated his magio call. There was a longer wait this time, but finally the performance his more commonplace opportunities and sent him first into the army and thence into the Ranger service. The world is full of such, and the frontier is their gathering was repeated. The marksman rose, up the two birds, and came back picked place. "Do you like to read?" she asked him

"Say! It's my favorite form of exer-cise," Law's blue-gray eyes wers expres-sioniess, his face was bland. "Why?" "Kind of a low-down trick when they've just started housekeeping, ain't it?"

"I have a great many books at Las Pal-mas. You might enjoy some of them." "Now that's nice of you, ma'am. Mebbs I'll look into this cattle-stealin' in your neighborhood and if I do I'll Mrs. Austin saw that both crested heads had been cleanly severed. "That is quite wonderful," she said. "You must be an

"The took into this cattle-stealth" in your neighborhood, and if I do I'll sure come borrowin'." "Oh, I'll send you a boxful when I get back," said Alaire, and Dave thanked her humbly.

Later, when he went to move his mare into a shady spot, the Ranger chuckled and siapped his high with his hat. "Bessie Bells, wo're going to improve our minds," he said, alcud. "We're going to be literary and read 'Pilgrim's Progress' and 'Alice in Wonderland.' I bet we'll enjoy 'em, eh? But-doggone! She's a nice lady, and your coat is just the same color as her hair."

Law had one of the birds picked by this time. "I tell 'em a snake has got ma. I reckon each one thinks the other is in trouble and comes to the rescue. Anyhow, it's a mighty mean trick." Ha would not permit her to help with the breakfast, so she isy back enjoying the uxury of her hard bed and watching her host, whose personality, now that she saw him by daylight, had begun to challenge her interest. Of late years she had pur-posely avoided men, and circumstances had not permitted her to study those few she had been forced to meet; but now that fate had thrown her into the company of this stranger, she permitted some play to her curiosity.

hair." Where the shade was demest and the breas played most freely, there Dave fixed a comfortable couch for his guest, and during the hest of the foremon ahe dozed. Asleep she exercised upon him an even more disturbing effect than when awake, for now he could study her basuity deliber-ately, from the loose pile of warm, red hair to the narrow tight-laced boots. Her slight-hy parted lips offered an irresistible attrao-tion—almost an invitation; the heat had leat a feverish flush to her cheeks; Dave ouid count the slow pulmations of her whits throat. He closed his eyes and ried to quell his unruly longings. He was a strong man; adventurous days and nights spent in the open had coarsoned the ma-roune side of his character, perhaps at ex-panse to his finer nature, for it is a buman tendancy to revert. He was masterful and ruthless; lacking obligations or responsi-bilities of suy sort, he had been accou-tomed to take what he wanted; therefore the gase he fixed upon the sleeping woman betrayed an ardor calculated to deepen the court in her obsels had also bene is dou-ter the strong smouth bays realized that his unnully smouth. Dave realized that his unstions were unaccountibly intend. This woman's distress had, of course, brought a propage and majoral pr-gonne, but new her implicit confidence in ariosity. Physically Law was an admirable make Physically Law was an admirable make-considerably over six feet in height, with wide shoulders and lean, strong limbs, Although his face was schooled to mask all but the keenest emotions, the definase of his movements was elequent, betraying that complete muscular and pervous con-trol which comes from life in the open. A pair of blue-gray, meditative eyes, with a whimsical fashion of wrinkling helf-shut when he taiked, relieved a countenance that otherwise would have been a trifle grim and somber. The nose was prominent and boldly arched, the sars large and pro-nounced and standing well away from the head; the mouth was thin-lipped and mobile. Alate tried to read that browsed viagre, with little success until she closed her eyes with little success until she closed h and regarded the mental image. The found the answer: Law had the fa-the head of a hunter. The alert on wateliful eyes, the predatory nose we

Reaching for a coal, the Ranger spoke without facing her. "Tye read a good bit, ma'am, and I'm a noble listener. I re-

ventured.

ambly. Later, when he went to move his mare

"T'll bet you

I've been back, off and on, since, and I've burned a good deal of Guadalupe property and swum a good many head of Guada-lupe stock." member good, too. Why I had a picture of the Bastille once." He pronounced it "Bas-tilly," and his hearer settled back. "That As the morning progressed Law proved

himself an interesting companion, and in spite of the discomforts of the situation the hours alipped past rapidly. Luncheon the hours alipped past rapidly. Luncheon was a disagreeable meal, eaten while the arroyo baked and the heat devils dancel on the hills; but the unpleasantness was of brief duration, and Law always managed to baailah boredon. Nor did he seem to waste a thought upon the nature of that grim business which brought him to this place. Quite the contrary; in the afternoon he put his mare through her tricks for Alaire's edification, and gessiped idly of whatever interested his guest. Then as the sun edged to the west and

terested his guest. Then as the sun edged to the west and Then as the sun edged to the saddled

Then as the sub edged to the west and Mrs. Austin became resilers, he saddled Bessle Belle and led her down the guich into a safer covert. Returning, he carefully obliterated all traces of the camp. He watered the ashes of the fire, gathered up the tell-tale scraps of paper and fragments of food, and then when the place suited him fell to examin-

when the place suited him fell to examin-ing his rifle. Alaire watched him with interest. "Where shall I go," she asked, "and what shall I

Alairo's retreat was far from comforts

Alaire's retreat was far from comfort-able; there was an ants' nest somewhere near her and alls thought of moving; but suddenly her breath caupht and her hears jumped uncontrollably. She crouched low-er, for directly opposite her position, and outlined against the sky where the sharp ridge cut it, was the figure of a mounted man. Rider and horse were slibousted against the part-gray heaven like an equestrian statue. How long they had been there Alaire had no faintest notion. Per-haps it was their coming which had alarmed the cattle. She was conscious that a keen and hostile pair of eyes was assoching the coverts surrounding the charco. Thes, as sliently as it had appeared, the apparition vanished beyond the ridge, and Alairs wondered if the rider had takan alarm. She associed to rider had takan Where the shade was densest and the

the sight of that the og on nises to throbbing: and, that was play and probably desperain.

> CONTINUED IN MONDAY'S

"Yes'm. You can fool turkeys the same way. Turkeys are easy." "What do you say to them? What brings them out, all ruffled up?" she asked, curiusly. Law had one of the birds picked by