The Lone Star Ranger

A Fine Tale of the Open Country

By ZANE GREY

SYNOPSIS.

The time of the story: about 1875. The place: The Texas cow country. The chief character: Buckley Duane, a young man who has inherited a lust to kill, which he suppresses. In self-defense he shoots dead a drunken bully and is forced to flee to the wild country where he joins Bland's outlaw band. Kuchra, an amiable rascal, tells him about Jennie, a young girl who had been abducted and sold to Bland for a bad fate. They determine to rescue the girl and restore her to civilization. Eudshre is killed. Buck kills Bland and is dangerously wounded by Mrs. Bland, but escapes with Jennie.

Considering all the domestic troubles, family scandals and love affairs that turn out badly, one might be cynical indeed about the power of woman's affection and trust to keep a man on the path of honor in the face of alluring temptation. But there comes into Buck Duane's life a feminine influence so fine—as depicted by the author—that the reader of "The Lone Star Ranger" cannot resist the charm of it all. If you want the cream of romance and adventure, don't miss this installment.

CHAPTER X—Continued.

Buck and Jennie are sitting in the wilderness cabin discussing their future.

"I've been brought up in Texas. I remember what a hard lot the men of my family had. But poor as they were, they had a roof over their heads, a hearth with a fire, a woman and somebody to love them. And you, Duane—oh, my God! What must your life be? You must ride and hide and watch eternally."

She ended with a sob and dropped her head on her knees. Duane was amazed, deeply touched.

"My girl, thank you for that thought of me," he said, with a tremor in his voice. "You don't know how much that means to me."

She raised her face, and it was tear-stained, eloquent, beautiful.

"I've heard tell—the best of men go to the bad out there. I won't. Promise me you won't. I never—knew any man—like you. I—I—we may never see each other again—after to-day. I'll never forget you. I'll pray for you, and I'll never give up trying to—to do something. Don't despair. It's never too late. It was my hope that kept me alive—out there at Bland's—before you came. I was only a poor weak girl. But if I could hope—so can you. Stay away from men. Be a lone wolf. Fight for your life. Stick out your exile—and maybe—some day—"

Then she lost her voice. Duane clasped her hand and with feeling as deep as hers promised to remember her words. In her despair for him she had spoken wisdom—pointed out the only course.

Duane's vigilance, momentarily broken by emotion, had no sooner reasserted itself than he discovered the bay horse, the one Jennie rode, had broken his halter and gone off. The soft wet earth had deadened the sound of his hoofs. His tracks were plain in the mud.

Duane did not want to leave Jennie alone in the cabin so near the road. So he put her on his horse and bade her follow. The rain had ceased for the time being, though evidently the storm was not yet over. The tracks led up a wash to a wide flat where mesquite, prickly pear, and thorn-bush grew so thickly that Jennie could not ride into it. He could not expect her to scramble quickly through that brake on foot. Therefore he decided to risk leaving her at the edge of the thicket and go in alone.

As he went in a sound startled him. Was it the breaking of a branch he had stepped on or thrust aside? He heard the impatient pound of his horse's hoofs. Then all was quiet. Still he listened, not wholly satisfied. He was never satisfied in regard to safety; he knew too well that there never could be safety for him in this country. Certain he was now that some kind of danger threatened.

Suddenly there came an unmistakable thump of horses' hoofs out somewhere to the fore. Then a scream rent the air. It ended abruptly. Duane leaped forward, tore his way through the thorny brake, He heard Jennie cry again—an appealing call quickly hushed. It seemed more to his right, and he plunged that way. His burst into a glade where a smoldering fire and ground covered with footprints and tracks showed that campers had lately been. Rushing across this, he broke his passage out to the open. But he was too late. His horse had disappeared. Jennie was gone. There were no riders in sight. There was no sound. There was a heavy trail of horses going north. Jennie had been carried off—probably by outlaws. Duane realized that pursuit was out of the question—that Jennie was lost.

CHAPTER XI.

A hundred miles from the haunts most familiar with Duane's deeds, far up where the Nueces ran a trickling clear stream between yellow cliffs, stood a small deserted shack of covered mesquite poles. It had been made long ago, but was well preserved. A door faced the overgrown trail, and another faced down into a gorge of dense thickets. On the border fugitives from law and men who hid in fear of someone they had wronged never lived in houses with only one door.

It was a wild spot, lonely, not fit for human habitation except for the outcast.

On clear days—and rare indeed were cloudy days—with the subsiding of the wind at sunset a hush seemed to fall around the little hut. Far-distant dim blue mountains stood gold-rimmed gradually to fade with the shading of light.

At this quiet hour a man climbed up out of the gorge and sat in the westward door of the hut. This lonely watcher of the west and listener to the silence was Duane. And this hut was the one where, three years before, Jennie had nursed him back to life.

The killing of a man named Sellers, and the combination of circumstances that had made the tragedy a memorable regret, had marked, if not a change, at least a cessation in Duane's activities. He had trailed Sellers to kill him for the supposed abducting of Jennie. Vague rumors, a few words here and there, unauthenticated stories were all that Duane had gathered in years to substantiate his belief—that Jennie died shortly after the beginning of her second captivity. Sellers might have told him. Duane expected, if not to force it from him at the end, to read it in his eyes. But the bullet went too unerringly; it locked his lips and fixed his eyes.

After that meeting Duane lay long at the ranch-house of a friend, and when he recovered from the wound Sellers had given him he started with two horses and a pack for the lonely gorge on the Nueces. There he had been hidden for months, a prey to remorse, a dreamer, a victim of phantoms.

It took work for him to find subsistence in that rocky fastness. And work, action, helped to pass the hours. But he could not work all the time, even if he had found it to do. Then, in his idle moments and at night his task was to live with the hell in his mind.

The sunset and the twilight hour made all the rest bearable. The little hut on the rim of the gorge seemed to hold Jennie's presence. It was not as if he felt her spirit. If it had been he would have been sure of her death. He hoped Jennie had not survived her second misfortune; and that intense hope had burned into belief, if not surety.

A strange feature of this memory of Jennie was the freshness of it—the failure of years, toil, strife, death-dealing to dim it—to deaden the thought of what might have been. He had a marvelous gift of visualization. He could shut his eyes and see Jennie before him just as clearly as if she had stood there in the flesh. For hours he did that, dreaming, dreaming of life he had never tasted and now never would taste. He thought of her beauty and sweetness, of the few things which had come to mean to him that she must have loved him; and he trained himself to think of these in preference to her life at Bland's, the escape with him, and then her recapture, because such memories led to bitter, fruitless pain. He had to fight suffering because it was eating out his heart.

Sitting there, eyes wide open, he dreamed of the old homestead and his white-haired mother. He saw the old home-life, sweetened and filled by dear new faces and added joys go on before his eyes with him a part of it.

Then in the inevitable reaction, in the reflux of bitter reality, he would send out a voiceless cry no less poignant because it was silent;—a longing to see the faces of people, to hear their voices—a pleasurable emotion sad and strange. But it was only a pressure of his old bitter, sleepless, and eternal vigilance.

Mercer was the first village he rode into. He had many friends there. Mercer claimed to owe Duane a debt. On the outskirts of the village there was a grave overgrown by brush so that the rude cross-tied post which marked it was scarcely visible to Duane as he rode by. He had never read the inscription. But he thought now of Hardin. For many years Hardin had harassed the stockmen and ranchers in and around Mercer. On an evil day for him he or his outlaws had beaten and robbed a man who once succored Duane when sore in need. Duane met Hardin in the little plaza of the village, called him every name known to border men, taunted him to draw, and killed him in the act.

Duane went to the house of one Jones, a Texan who had known his father, and there he was warmly received. The feel of an honest hand, the voice of a friend, the prattle of children who were not afraid of him or his gun, good wholesome food, and change of clothes—these things for the time being made a changed man of Duane. To be sure, he did not often speak. The price of his head and the weight of his burden made him silent. But eagerly he drank in all the news that was told him. In the years of his absence from home he had never heard a word about his mother or uncle. Those who were his real friends on the border would have been the last to make inquiries, to write or receive letters that might give a clue to Duane's whereabouts.

Duane remained all day with this hospitable Jones, and as twilight fell was loath to go and yielded to a pressing invitation to remain overnight. It was seldom indeed that Duane slept under a roof. Early in the evening, while Duane sat on the porch with two awed and hero-worshiping sons of the house, Jones returned from a quick visit down to the postoffice. Summarily he sent the boys off. He labored under intense excitement.

"Duane, there's rangers in town," he whispered. "It's all over town, too, that you're here. You rode in long after sunup. Lots of people saw you. I don't believe there's a man or boy that will squeal on you. But the women might. They gossip, and these rangers are handsome fellows—devils with the women."

"What company of rangers?" asked Duane, quietly.

"Company A, under Captain MacNelly, that new ranger. He made a big name in the war. And since, he's been in the range service he's done wonders. He's cleaned up some bad places south, and he's working north."

"MacNelly. I've heard of him. Describe him to me."

"Slight-built chap, but wiry and tough. Clean face, black mustache and hair. Sharp black eyes. He's got a look of authority. MacNelly's a fine man, Duane. Belongs to a good Southern family. I'd hate to have him look you up."

Duane did not speak.

"MacNelly's got nerve, and his rangers are all experienced men. If they find out you're here they'll come after you. MacNelly's no gun-fighter, but he wouldn't hesitate to do his duty, even if he faced sure death. Which he would in this case, Duane, you mustn't meet Captain MacNelly. Your record is clean, if it is terrible. You never met a ranger or any officer except a rotten sheriff now and then, like Rod Brown."

Still Duane kept silence. He was not thinking of danger, but of the fact of how fleeting must be his stay among friends.

"I've already fixed up a pack of grub," went on Jones. "I'll slip out to saddle your horse. You watch here."

He had scarcely uttered the last words when soft, swift footsteps sounded on the hard path. A man turned in the gate. The light was dim, yet clear enough to disclose an unusually tall figure. When it appeared nearer he was seen to be walking with both arms raised, hands high. He slowed his stride.

"Does Burt Jones live here?" he asked, in a low, hurried voice.

"I reckon. I'm Burt. What can I do for you?" replied Jones.

The stranger peered around, stealthily came closer, still with his hands up.

"It is known that Buck Duane is here. Captain MacNelly's camping on the river just out of town. He sends word to Duane to come out there after dark."

The stranger wheeled and departed as swiftly and strangely as he had come.

"Bust me! Duane, whatever do you make of that?" exclaimed Jones.

"A new one on me," replied Duane, thoughtfully.

"First, fool thing I ever heard of MacNelly doing. Can't make head nor tails of it. I'd have said off-hand that MacNelly wouldn't double-cross anybody. He struck me a square man, sand all through. But hell! he must mean treachery. I can't see anything else in that deal."

"Maybe the Captain wants to give me a fair chance to surrender without bloodshed," observed Duane. "Pretty decent of him, if he meant that."

"He invites you to come to his camp after dark. Something strange about this, Duane. But MacNelly's a new man out here. He does some queer things. Perhaps he's getting a swelled head. Well, whatever his intentions, his presence around Mercer is enough for us, Duane, you hit the road and put some miles between you and the amiable Captain before daylight. Tomorrow I'll go out there and ask him what in the devil he means."

"That messenger he sent—he was a ranger," said Duane.

"Sure he was, and a nervy one! It must have taken sand to come bracing you that way, Duane, the fellow didn't pack a gun. I'll swear to that. Pretty odd, this trick. But you can't trust it. Hit the road, Duane."

A little later a black horse with muffled hoofs, bearing a tall dark rider who peered keenly into every shadow, trotted down a pasture lane back of Jones' house, turned into the road, and then, breaking into swifter gait, rapidly left Mercer behind.

CHAPTER XII.

Next morning Duane was off again, working south. During the next few days he paid brief visits to several villages that lay in his path. And in each some particular friend had a piece of news to impart that made Duane profoundly thoughtful. A ranger had made a quiet, unobtrusive call upon these friends and left this message, "Tell Buck Duane to ride into Captain MacNelly's camp some time after night."

Duane concluded, and his friends all agreed with him, that the new ranger's main purpose in the Nueces country was to capture or kill Buck Duane, and that this message was simply an original and striking ruse, the daring of which might appeal to certain outlaws.

But it did not appeal to Duane. His curiosity was aroused; it did not, however, tempt him to any foolhardy act. He turned southwest and rode a hundred miles until he again reached the sparsely settled country. Here he heard no more of rangers.

He got into rough country, rode for three days without covering much ground, but believed that he was getting on safer territory. Twice he came to a wide bottom-land green with willow and cottonwood and thick as chaparral, somewhere through the middle of which ran a river he decided must be the lower Nueces.

One evening as he stole out from a covert where he had camped, he saw the lights of a village. He tried to pass it on the left, but as he mounted a ridge he noted that the road made a sharp turn, and he could not see what was beyond it. He slowed up and was making the turn, which was downhill between high banks of yellow clay, when his mettlesome horse heard something to frighten him or shied at something and bolted.

The few bounds he took before Duane's iron arm checked him were enough to reach the curve. One flashing glance showed Duane the open once more, a little valley below with a wide, shallow, rocky stream, a clump of cottonwoods beyond, a somber group of men facing him, and two dark, limp, strangely grotesque figures hanging from branches.

The sight was common enough in southwest Texas, but Duane had never before found himself so unpleasantly close.

A hoarse voice pealed out: "By hell! there's another one!"

"Stranger, ride down an' account for yourself!" yelled another.

"Hands up!"

"That's right, Jack; don't take no chances. Plug him!"

These remarks were so swiftly uttered as almost to be continuous. Duane was wheeling his horse when a rifle cracked. The bullet struck his left forearm and he thought broke it, for he dropped the rein. The frightened horse leaped. Another bullet whistled past Duane. Then the bend in the road saved him probably from certain death. Like the wind his fleet steed went down the long hill.

Duane was in no hurry to look back. He knew what to expect. His chief concern of the moment was for his injured arm. He found that the bones were still intact; but the wound, having been made by a soft bullet, was an exceedingly bad one. Blood poured from it. Giving the horse his head, Duane wound his scarf tightly round the holes, and with teeth and hand tied it tightly. That done, he looked back over his shoulder.

Riders were making the dust fly on the hillside road. There were more coming round the cut where the road curved. Duane needed only one glance to tell him that they were fast and hard-riding cowboys in a land where all riders are good. They would not have owned any but strong, swift horses. Moreover, it was a district where ranchers had suffered beyond all endurance from the great brutality of outlaws. Duane had simply been so unfortunate as to run right into a lynching party at a time of all times when any stranger would be in danger and any outlaw put to his limit to escape with his life.

Duane did not look back again till he had crossed the ridgy piece of ground and had gotten to the level road. He had gained upon his pursuers. When he ascertained this he tried to save his horse, to check a little that killing gait. This horse was a magnificent animal, big, strong, fast; but his endurance had never been put to a grueling test. And that worried Duane. His life had made it impossible to keep one horse very long at a time, and this one was an unknown quantity.

Duane had only one plan—the only plan possible in his case—and that was to make the river-bottoms, where he might elude his pursuers in the willow brakes. Fifteen miles or so would bring him to the river, and this was not a hopeless distance for any good horse if not too closely pressed. He began to hope and look for a trail or a road turning off to right or left. There was none. A rough, mesquite-dotted and yucca-spired country extended away on stilter side. Duane believed that he would be compelled to take to this hard going. One thing was certain—he had to go round the village. The river, however, was on the outskirts of the village; and once in the willows, he would be safe.

Dust-clouds far ahead caused his alarm to grow. He watched with his eyes strained; he hoped to see a wagon, a few stray cattle. But no, he soon descried several horsemen. Shots and yells behind him attested to the fact that his pursuers likewise had seen these newcomers on the scene. More than a mile separated these two parties, yet that distance did not keep them from soon understanding each other. Duane waited only to see this new factor show signs of sudden quick action, and then, with a muttered curse, he spurred his horse off the road into the brush.

He chose the right side, because the river lay nearer that way and put his horse to his best efforts, straight ahead. He had to pass those men. When this was seemingly made impossible by a deep wash from which he had to turn, Duane began to feel cold and sick. Almost he did his bearings, and finally would have ridden toward his enemies had not good fortune favored him in the matter of an open burned-over stretch of ground.

Here he saw both groups of pursuers, one on each side and almost within gunshot. Their sharp yells, as much as his cruel spurs, drove his horse into that pace which now meant life or death for him. And never had Duane bestridden a gamer, swifter, stanicher beast. He seemed about to accomplish the impossible. In the disgusting smoke he was far superior to any horse in pursuit, and on this sandy open stretch he gained enough to spare a little in the brush beyond. Heated now and thoroughly terrorized, he kept the pace through thickets that almost tore Duane from his saddle. Something weighty and grim eased off Duane. He was going to get out in front! The horse had speed, fire, stamina.

A race began then, a dusty, crashing drive through gray mesquite. Duane could scarcely see, he was so blinded by stinging branches across his eyes. The hollow wind roared in his ears. He lost his sense of the nearness of his pursuers. But they must have been close. Did they shoot at him? He imagined he heard shots. But that might have been the cracking of dead snags. His left arm hung limp, almost useless; he handled the rein with his right; and most of the time he hung low over the pommel.

Suddenly he burst out of a line of mesquite into the road. A long stretch of lonely road! How fiercely, with hot, strange joy, he wheeled his horse upon it! Then he was sweeping along, sure now that he was out in front. His horse still had strength and speed, dark, limp, strangely grotesque figures hanging from branches.

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For Hours He Did That, Dreaming.

"Poor fool! No, I shall never see mother again—never go home—never have a home. I am Duane, the Lone Wolf!"

A group of specters trooped out of the shadows of dusk and, gathering round him, escorted him to his bed.

Every one of his victims, singly and collectively, returned to him for ever. It seemed, in cold, passionless, accusing domination. They did not accuse him of dishonor or cowardice or brutality or murder; they only accused him of death. It was as if they knew more than when they were alive, had learned that life was a divine mysterious gift not to be taken. They thronged about him with their voiceless clamoring, drifted around him with their fading eyes.

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After nearly six months in the Nueces gorge the loneliness and inaction of his life drove Duane out upon the trails seeking anything rather than to hide longer alone, a prey to the scourge of his thoughts. The moment he rode into sight of men a remarkable transformation occurred in him. A strange warmth stirred in him—a longing to see the faces of people, to hear their voices—a pleasurable emotion sad and strange. But it was only a pressure of his old bitter, sleepless, and eternal vigilance.

Mercer was the first village he rode into. He had many friends there. Mercer claimed to owe Duane a debt. On the outskirts of the village there was a grave overgrown by brush so that the rude-hewed post which marked it was scarcely visible to Duane as he rode by. He had never read the inscription. But he thought now of Hardin. For many years Hardin had harassed the stockmen and ranchers in and around Mercer. On an evil day for him he or his outlaws had beaten and robbed a man who once succored Duane when sore in need. Duane met Hardin in the little plaza of the village, called him every name known to border men, taunted him to draw, and killed him in the act.

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"Duane, there's rangers in town," he whispered. "It's all over town, too, that you're here. You rode in long after sunup. Lots of people saw you. I don't believe there's a man or boy that will squeal on you. But the women might. They gossip, and these rangers are handsome fellows—devils with the women."

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A little later a black horse with muffled hoofs, bearing a tall dark rider who peered keenly into every shadow, trotted down a pasture lane back of Jones' house, turned into the road, and then, breaking into swifter gait, rapidly left Mercer behind.

CHAPTER XII.

Next morning Duane was off again, working south. During the next few days he paid brief visits to several villages that lay in his path. And in each some particular friend had a piece of news to impart that made Duane profoundly thoughtful. A ranger had made a quiet, unobtrusive call upon these friends and left this message, "Tell Buck Duane to ride into Captain MacNelly's camp some time after night."

Duane concluded, and his friends all agreed with him, that the new ranger's main purpose in the Nueces country was to capture or kill Buck Duane, and that this message was simply an original and striking ruse, the daring of which might appeal to certain outlaws.

But it did not appeal to Duane. His curiosity was aroused; it did not, however, tempt him to any foolhardy act. He turned southwest and rode a hundred miles until he again reached the sparsely settled country. Here he heard no more of rangers.

He got into rough country, rode for three days without covering much ground, but believed that he was getting on safer territory. Twice he came to a wide bottom-land green with willow and cottonwood and thick as chaparral, somewhere through the middle of which ran a river he decided must be the lower Nueces.

One evening as he stole out from a covert where he had camped, he saw the lights of a village. He tried to pass it on the left, but as he mounted a ridge he noted that the road made a sharp turn, and he could not see what was beyond it. He slowed up and was making the turn, which was downhill between high banks of yellow clay, when his mettlesome horse heard something to frighten him or shied at something and bolted.

The few bounds he took before Duane's iron arm checked him were enough to reach the curve. One flashing glance showed Duane the open once more, a little valley below with a wide, shallow, rocky stream, a clump of cottonwoods beyond, a somber group of men facing him, and two dark, limp, strangely grotesque figures hanging from branches.

The sight was common enough in southwest Texas, but Duane had never before found himself so unpleasantly close.

A hoarse voice pealed out: "By hell! there's another one!"

"Stranger, ride down an' account for yourself!" yelled another.

"Hands up!"

"That's right, Jack; don't take no chances. Plug him!"

These remarks were so swiftly uttered as almost to be continuous. Duane was wheeling his horse when a rifle cracked. The bullet struck his left forearm and he thought broke it, for he dropped the rein. The frightened horse leaped. Another bullet whistled past Duane. Then the bend in the road saved him probably from certain death. Like the wind his fleet steed went down the long hill.

Duane was in no hurry to look back. He knew what to expect. His chief concern of the moment was for his injured arm. He found that the bones were still intact; but the wound, having been made by a soft bullet, was an exceedingly bad one. Blood poured from it. Giving the horse his head, Duane wound his scarf tightly round the holes, and with teeth and hand tied it tightly. That done, he looked back over his shoulder.

Riders were making the dust fly on the hillside road. There were more coming round the cut where the road curved. Duane needed only one glance to tell him that they were fast and hard-riding cowboys in a land where all riders are good. They would not have owned any but strong, swift horses. Moreover, it was a district where ranchers had suffered beyond all endurance from the great brutality of outlaws. Duane had simply been so unfortunate as to run right into a lynching party at a time of all times when any stranger would be in danger and any outlaw put to his limit to escape with his life.

Duane did not look back again till he had crossed the ridgy piece of ground and had gotten to the level road. He had gained upon his pursuers. When he ascertained this he tried to save his horse, to check a little that killing gait. This horse was a magnificent animal, big, strong, fast; but his endurance had never been put to a grueling test. And that worried Duane. His life had made it impossible to keep one horse very long at a time, and this one was an unknown quantity.

Duane had only one plan—the only plan possible in his case—and that was to make the river-bottoms, where he might elude his pursuers in the willow brakes. Fifteen miles or so would bring him to the river, and this was not a hopeless distance for any good horse if not too closely pressed. He began to hope and look for a trail or a road turning off to right or left. There was none. A rough, mesquite-dotted and yucca-spired country extended away on stilter side. Duane believed that he would be compelled to take to this hard going. One thing was certain—he had to go round the village. The river, however, was on the outskirts of the village; and once in the willows, he would be safe.

Dust-clouds far ahead caused his alarm to grow. He watched with his eyes strained; he hoped to see a wagon, a few stray cattle. But no, he soon descried several horsemen. Shots and yells behind him attested to the fact that his pursuers likewise had seen these newcomers on the scene. More than a mile separated these two parties, yet that distance did not keep them from soon understanding each other. Duane waited only to see this new factor show signs of sudden quick action, and then, with a muttered curse, he spurred his horse off the road into the brush.

He chose the right side, because the river lay nearer that way and put his horse to his best efforts, straight ahead. He had to pass those men. When this was seemingly made impossible by a deep wash from which he had to turn, Duane began to feel cold and sick. Almost he did his bearings, and finally would have ridden toward his enemies had not good fortune favored him in the matter of an open burned-over stretch of ground.

Here he saw both groups of pursuers, one on each side and almost within gunshot. Their sharp yells, as much as his cruel spurs, drove his horse into that pace which now meant life or death for him. And never had Duane bestridden a gamer, swifter, stanicher beast. He seemed about to accomplish the impossible. In the disgusting smoke he was far superior to any horse in pursuit, and on this sandy open stretch he gained enough to spare a little in the brush beyond. Heated now and thoroughly terrorized, he kept the pace through thickets that almost tore Duane from his saddle. Something weighty and grim eased off Duane. He was going to get out in front! The horse had speed, fire, stamina.

A race began then, a dusty, crashing drive through gray mesquite. Duane could scarcely see, he was so blinded by stinging branches across his eyes. The hollow wind roared in his ears. He lost his sense of the nearness of his pursuers. But they must have been close. Did they shoot at him? He imagined he heard shots. But that might have been the cracking of dead snags. His left arm hung limp, almost useless; he handled the rein with his right; and most of the time he hung low over the pommel.

Suddenly he burst out of a line of mesquite into the road. A long stretch of lonely road! How fiercely, with hot, strange joy, he wheeled his horse upon it! Then he was sweeping along, sure now that he was out in front. His horse still had strength and speed, dark, limp, strangely grotesque figures hanging from branches.

The Sight Was Common Enough.

straight for the river. Threading a passage through a willow brake was an old task for him. Many days and nights had gone to the acquiring of a skill that might have been envied by an Indian.

Do you believe that Captain McNelly is trying to lure Duane to his camp at night time in order to shoot him from ambush?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

WHISPERED STORY OF RUTH

And Each Little Jewish Girl Was Rewarded With Feast Cake for Her Effort.

In the East side of New York as in the East end of London, the Jewish quarter of Paris or Judengasse of Berlin, thousands of Jewish mothers and grandmothers gathered the little daughters of the family to them one night recently. Into tiny ears was whispered the story of Ruth, the faithful. In each kitchen stood a new broom, and tallow candles burned brightly on tables spread with meats, wines and cakes.

"Little daughter," each mother whispered, "do you know what Ruth said to Naomi?"

"Yes," each little girl replied eagerly. She had rehearsed the great epic for weeks. "Ruth said 'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee. For whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy god my God.'"

And, beaming her pride, each mother then said:

"Good! Here is a cake for you!"

Thus the feast of Shabuoth was ushered in. The broom was just as much a part of the ceremony as the reward of a cake. With it one could sweep out the spirits and demons, the scheidim and maskim, which ghetto traditions of the medieval ages insist are present during Omer, the time between Passover and Shabuoth.—New York Tribune.

Flanders.

The Flemish form of the name Flanders is Vlaenderen, and the word means the country of the Flemish. The Flanders of the middle ages was a self-governing countship, that is, a country whose ruler was a count, but at times it was under the suzerainty of France, and sometimes under that of the empire which then included the Germanic states. The Flanders of the middle ages is today divided between France and Belgium, the greater part being included in Belgium, and two provinces in the western part of the latter country are known as East and West Flanders, the latter frouting on the North sea. Practically all the country that formed the Flanders of the middle ages is low and level; hence it was commonly called the Low Country. Ypres and the British lines out to the North sea and south for a considerable distance into northern France, are in a country that formed part of old Flanders.

Tax Protest of Roman Matrons.

The earliest deputation of women to parliament was organized close on two thousand years ago. Under the triumvirate of Augustus, Antony and Lepidus it was proposed to tax the property of 1,400 wealthy Roman matrons in order to meet part of the expenses of the civil war then raging. They refused to submit to this imposition, and sent Hortensia, one of their number, to plead against it before the senate. In the course of her speech she asked: "Why should we be compelled to pay for a war into which we had no wish to embark, or for the support of a government whose policy we have no means of controlling?" This argument proved so effective that the tax on women was reduced to one-third of the amount originally proposed.

There are over 1,500 Esperanto societies in the world.

May Make Soap From Lemons.

The humble lemon-pip, of which great quantities are every year accumulated by Australian lemon-squash manufacturers, appears likely to earn respect as an article of commercial value. The federal analyst has recently furnished a report to the effect that the dried pips contain a large proportion of oil.

By ether extractions the yield of oil was 23 per cent, and by extraction with petroleum benzine 21 per cent. The oil obtained from the pips is clear, of pale straw color, wholly saponifiable, and has slight but rather persistent bitter taste.

Possibly the oil expressed from the pips by direct hot pressing would not possess a bitter taste; if so, it would be of value for edible purposes, and, being wholly saponifiable, could, as an alternative, be used for soap-making.

Mother Gray's Sweet Powders for Children

For Feverishness, Bad Stomach, Teething Sorders, move the bowels, regulate the bowels and are a pleasant remedy for worms. Used by Mothers for 29 years. They are so pleasant to take, children like them. They never fail. At all Druggists, 25c. Sample FREE. Address, Mother Gray Co., Le Roy, N. Y. Adv.

Contrary Way.

"How does he manage to lend color to his assertions?"

"Mainly, I think, by white lies."

Remember Value of Time.

"Time is money," said Benjamin Franklin, "if you want to save money, save time."

HELP FOR WORKING WOMEN

Some Have to Keep on Until They Almost Drop. How Mrs. Conley Got Help.

Here is a letter from a woman who had to work, but was too weak and suffered too much to continue. How she regained health:—

Frankfort, Ky.—"I suffered so much with female weakness that I could not do my own work, had to hire it done. I heard so much about Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound that I tried it. I took three bottles and I found it to be all you claim. Now I feel as well as ever I did and am able to do all my own work again. I recommend it to any woman suffering from female weakness. You may publish my letter if you wish."—Mrs. JAMES CONLEY, 516 St. Clair St., Frankfort, Ky.

No woman suffering from any form of female trouble should lose hope until she has given Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a fair trial.

This famous remedy, the medicinal ingredients of which are derived from native roots and herbs, has for forty years proved to be a most valuable tonic and invigorator of the female organism.

All women are invited to write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass., for special advice,—it will be confidential.

Skin Muddy?

Dull eyes, blotches and other skin blemishes result from a disordered digestion. Purify the blood, tone the stomach, gently stimulate the liver and regulate the bowels and bile with

BEECHAM'S PILLS

Largest Sale of Any Medicine in the World. Sold everywhere. In boxes. 10c., 25c.

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