The Light of Western Stars

A Romance

By Zane Grey

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CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

—12—

Stewart led Majesty out into the darkness past a line of mounted horses.

"Guess we're ready," he said. "I'll make the count." He went back along the line, and on the return Madeline heard him say several times, "Now, everybody ride close to the horse in front, and keep quiet till daylight." Then the snorting and pounding of the big black horse in front of her told Madeline that Stewart had mounted.

"All right, we're off," he called.

Madeline lifted Majesty's bridle and let the roan go. The trail led in a roundabout way through shallow gulies full of stone and brush washed down by floods. At every turn now Madeline expected to come upon water and the waiting pack-train. But time passed, and miles of climbing, and no water or horses were met. Expectation in Madeline gave place to desire; she was hungry.

Stewart kept on. It was eight o'clock by Madeline's watch when, upon turning into a wide hollow, she saw horses grazing on spare grass, a great pile of canvas-covered bundles, and a fire round which cowboys and two Mexican women were busy.

Madeline sat her horse and reviewed her followers as they rode up single file. Her guests were in merry mood, and they all talked at once.

"Breakfast—and rustle," called out Stewart, without ceremony.

For that matter, Madeline observed Helen did not show any marked contrast to the others. The hurry order did not interfere with the meal being somewhat in the nature of a picnic.

As soon as the pack-train was in readiness Stewart started it off in the lead to break trail. A heavy growth of shrub interspersed with rock and cactus covered the slopes; and now all the trail appeared to be uphill. The pack-train forged ahead, and the trailing couples grew farther apart. At noon they got out of the foothills to face the real ascent of the mountains.

Stewart waited for Madeline, and as she came up he said: "We're going to have a storm. Shall I call a halt and make camp?"

"Here? Oh no! What do you think best?"

"Well, if we have a good healthy thunderstorm it will be something new for your friends. I think we'd be wise to keep on the go. There's no place to make a good camp. If it rains, let it rain. The pack outfit is well covered. We will have to get wet."

"Surely," replied Madeline; and she smiled at his inference. She knew what a storm was in that country, and her guests had yet to experience one. "If it rains, let it rain."

Stewart rode on, and Madeline followed. The way led in a winding course through a matted, storm-wrenched forest of stunted trees. Even up to this elevation the desert reached with its gaunt hand. The clouds overspreading the sky, hiding the sun, made a welcome change. The pack-train rested, and Stewart and Madeline waited for the party to come up. Here he briefly explained to her that Don Carlos and his bandits had left the ranch some time in the night. The air grew oppressive; the horses panted.

"Sure it'll be a hummer," said Stewart. "The first storm almost always is bad. I can feel it in the air."

The air, indeed, seemed to be charged with a heavy force that was waiting to be liberated.

One by one the couples mounted to the cedar forest, and the feminine contingent declaimed eloquently for rest. But there was to be no permanent rest until night and then that depended upon reaching the crags. The pack-train wagged onward, and Stewart fell in behind. The storm-center gathered slowly around the peaks; low rumble and bowl of thunder increased in frequence; slowly the light shaded as smoky clouds rolled up; the air grew sultrier, and the exasperating breeze puffed a few times and then failed.

An hour later the party had climbed high and was rounding the side of a great bare ridge that long had hidden the crags. The last burro of the pack-train plodded over the ridge out of Madeline's sight. She looked backward down the slope, amused to see her guests change wearily from side to side in their saddles. Far below lay the cedar flat and the foothills. Far to the west the sky was still clear, with shafts of sunlight shooting down from behind the encroaching clouds.

Stewart reached the summit of the ridge and, though only a few rods ahead, he waved to her, sweeping his hand round to what he saw beyond. It was an impressive gesture, and Madeline, never having climbed as high as this, anticipated much.

Majesty surmounted the last few steps and, snorting, halted beside Stewart's black. To Madeline the scene was as if the world had changed. The ridge was a mountain-top. It dropped before her into a black, stone-ridged, shrub-pitched, many-canyoned gulf. Massed inky clouds were piling across the peaks, obscuring the lower ones. A fork of white lightning flashed, and, like the booming of an avalanche, thunder followed.

Madeline glanced at Stewart. He had forgotten her presence. Immovable as stone, he sat, his horse, dark-faced, dark-eyed, and, like an Indian unconscious of thought, he watched and watched. To see him thus, to divine the strange affinity between the soul of this man, become primitive, and the savage environment that had developed him, were powerful helps to Madeline Hammond in her strange desire to understand his nature.

A crashing of iron-shod hoofs behind her broke the spell. Monty had reached the summit.

"Gene, what it won't all be doin' in a minute Moses himself couldn't tell," observed Monty.

Then Dorothy climbed to his side and looked.

"Oh, isn't it just perfectly lovely!" she exclaimed. "But I wish it wouldn't storm. We'll all get wet."

Once more Stewart faced the ascent, keeping to the slow heave of the ridge as it rose southward toward the loom-ing spires of rock. Soon he was off smooth ground, and Madeline, some rods behind him, looked back with concern at her friends. Here the real toil, the real climb began, and a mountain storm was about to burst in all its fury.

The sky grew blacker; the slow-gathering clouds appeared to be suddenly agitated; they piled and rolled and mushroomed and obscured the crags. The air moved heavily and seemed to be laden with sulphurous smoke, and sharp lightning flashes began to play. A distant roar of wind could be heard between the peals of thunder.

Stewart waited for Madeline under the lee of a shelving cliff, where the cowboys had halted the pack-train. Majesty was sensitive to the flashes of lightning. Madeline patted his neck and softly called to him. The weary burros nodded; the Mexican women covered their heads with their mantles. Stewart untied the slicker at the back of Madeline's saddle and helped her on with it. Then he put on his own. The other cowboys followed suit. Presently Madeline saw Monty and Dorothy rounding the cliff, and hoped the others would come soon.

A blue-white, knotted rope of lightning burned down out of the clouds, and instantly a thunder-clap crashed, seeming to shake the foundations of the earth. This moment of the breaking of the storm, with the strange growling roar of wind, like a mourning monster, was pregnant with a heart-disturbing emotion for Madeline Hammond. Glorious it was to be free, healthy, out in the open, under the shadow of the mountain and cloud, in the teeth of the wind and rain and storm.

Suddenly, as the ground quaked under her horse's feet, and all the sky grew black and crisscrossed by flaming streaks, and between thunderous reports there was a strange hollow roar sweeping down upon her, she realized how small was her knowledge and experience of the mighty forces of nature.

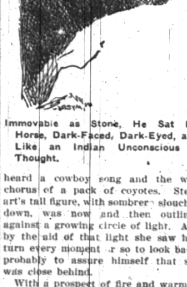
With blacker gloom and deafening roar came the torrent of rain. It was a cloud-burst. It was like solid water tumbling down. For long Madeline sat her horse, head bent to the pelting rain. When its force lessened and she heard Stewart call for all to follow, she looked up to see that he was starting onto more. She turned her horse into his trail.

Rain fell steadily. The fury of the storm, however, had passed, and the roll of thunder diminished in volume. The air had wonderfully cleared and was growing cool. Madeline began to feel uncomfortably cold and wet. Stewart was climbing faster than formerly, and she noted that Monty kept at her heels, pressing her on. Time had been lost, and the camp-site was a long way off. The stag-hounds began to lag and get footsore. The sharp rocks of the trail were cruel to their feet. Then, as Madeline began to tire, she noticed less and less around her. Her horse climbed and climbed, and brush and sharp corners of stone everlastingly pulled and tore at her wet garments.

A gray gloom settled down around her. Night was approaching.

Stewart's horse was on a jog-trot now, and Madeline left the trail more to Majesty than to her own choosing.

As black night began to envelop her surroundings, she marked that the fir trees had given place to pine forest. Suddenly a pin-point of light pierced the ebony blackness. It grew larger. Black tree-trunks crossed her line of vision. The light was a fire. She



Immovable as Stone, He Sat His Horse, Dark-Faced, Dark-Eyed, and, Like an Indian Unconscious of Thought.

heard a cowboy song and the wild chorus of a pack of coyotes. Stewart's tall figure, with sombrero slouched down, was now and then outlined against a growing circle of light. And by the aid of that light she saw him turn every moment or so to look back, probably to assure himself that she was close behind.

With a prospect of fire and warmth, and food and rest, Madeline's enthusiasm revived. What a climb! There was promise in this wild ride and lonely trail and hidden craggy height, not only in the adventure her friends yearned for, but in some nameless joy and spirit for herself.

CHAPTER XV

The Crags.

Glad indeed was Madeline to be lifted off her horse beside a roaring fire—to see steaming pots upon red-hot coals. Except about her shoulders, which had been protected by the slicker, she was singing wet. The Mexican women came quickly to help her change to a tent nearby; but Madeline preferred for the moment to warm her numb feet and hands and to watch the spectacle of her arriving friends.

"Warm clothes—hot drinks and grub—warm blankets," rang out Stewart's sharp order.

Then, with Florence helping the Mexican women, it was not long until Madeline and the feminine side of the party were comfortable, except for the weariness and aches that only rest and sleep could alleviate.

Neither fatigue nor pains, however, nor the strangeness of being packed sardinelike under canvas, nor the howls of coyotes, kept Madeline's guests from stretching out with long, grateful sighs, and one by one dropping into deep slumber. Madeline whispered a little to Florence, and laughed with her once or twice, and then the light flickering on the canvas faded and her eyelids closed. Darkness and roar of camp life, low voices of men, thump of horses' hoofs, coyote serenade, the sense of warmth, and sweet rest—all drifted away.

When she awakened shadows of swaying branches moved on the sunlit canvas above her. Slow, regular breathing attested to the deep slumbers of her tent comrades. She observed presently that Florence was missing from the number. Madeline rose and peeped out between the flaps.

An exquisitely beautiful scene surprised and enthralled her gaze. Eager to get out where she could enjoy an unrestricted view, she searched for her pack, found it in a corner, and then hurriedly and quietly dressed.

Her favorite stag-hounds, Russ and Tartar, were asleep before the door, where they had been chained. She awakened them and loosened them, thinking the while that it must have been Stewart who had chained them near her. Close at hand also was a cowboy's bed rolled up in a tarpaulin.

The cool air, fragrant with pine and spruce and some subtle nameless tang, sweet and tonic, made Madeline stand erect and breathe slowly and deeply. It was like drinking of a magic draught. She felt it in her blood, that it quickened its flow. Turning to look in the other direction, beyond the tent, she saw the remnants of last night's temporary camp, and farther on a grove of beautiful pines from which came the sharp ring of the ax. Wider gaze took in a wonderful park, not only surrounded by lofty crags, but full of crags of lesser height, many lifting their heads from dark green groves of trees. The morning sun, not yet above the eastern elevations, sent its rosy and golden shafts in between the towering rocks to tip the pines.

Madeline with the hounds beside her walked through the beech grove. The ground was soft and springy and brown with pine-needles.

Florence espied her under the trees and came running. She was like a young girl with life and color and joy. She wore a flannel blouse, corduroy skirt, and moccasins. And her hair was fastened under a band like an Indian's.

"Castleton's gone with a gun, for hours, it seems," said Florence. "Gene just went to hunt him up. The other gentlemen are still asleep. I imagine they sure will sleep up heah in this air."

Then, business-like, Florence fell to questioning Madeline about details of camp arrangement which Stewart, and Florence herself, could hardly see to without suggestion.

As the day advanced the charm of the place grew upon Madeline. Even at noon, with the sun beating down, there was comfortable warmth rather than heat. It was the kind of warmth that Madeline liked to feel in the spring.

Presently a chorus of merry calls attracted her attention, and she turned to see Helen limping along with Dorothy, and Mrs. Beck and Edith supporting each other. They were all rested, but lame, and delighted with the place, and as hungry as bears awakened from a winter's sleep.

Then they had dinner, sitting on the ground after the manner of Indians; and it was a dinner that tasked merriment only because everybody was too busily appeasing appetite.

For a few days the prevailing features of camp life for Madeline's guests were sleep and rest. The men were more visibly affected by the mountain air than the women.

This languorous spell disappeared presently, and then the days were full of life and action. Necessarily, of course, Madeline and her guests were now thrown into the company with the cowboys. And the party grew to be like one big family.

Madeline found the situation one of keen and double interest for her. If before she had cared to study her cowboys, particularly Stewart, now, with the confidence afforded by her guests, she felt by turns she was amused and mystified and perplexed and saddened, and then again subtly pleased.

From the thought of Stewart, and the watchfulness growing out of it, she discovered more about him. He was not happy; he often paced up and down the grove at night; he absented himself from camp sometimes during the afternoon when Nels and Nick and Monty were there; he was always watching the trails, as if he expected to see some one come riding up. He alone of the cowboys did not indulge in the fun and talk around the campfire. He remained preoccupied and sad, and was always looking away into distance. Madeline had a strange sense of his guardianship over her; and, remembering Don Carlos, she imagined he worried a good deal over his charge, and, indeed, over the safety of all the party.

A favorite bounding spot of Madeline's was a shaded niche under the lee of crags facing the east. Here in the shade of afternoon, she and Edith would often lounge under a low-branched tree. Seldom they talked much, for it was afternoon and dreamy with the strange spell of this mountain fastness. There was smoky haze in the valleys, a fleecy cloud resting over the peaks, a sailing eagle in the blue sky, silence that was the unbroken silence of the wild heights, and a soft wind laden with incense of pine.

One afternoon, however, Edith appeared prone to talk seriously.

"See here, Majesty Hammond, do you intend to spend the rest of your life in this wilderness?" she asked, bluntly.

Madeline was silent.

"Oh, it is glorious! Don't misunderstand me, dear," went on Edith, earnestly, as she laid her hand on Madeline's. "This trip has been a revelation to me. I did not tell you, Majesty, that I was ill when I arrived. Now I'm well. So well! Look at Helen too. Why, she was a ghost when we got here. Now she is brown and strong and beautiful. If it were for nothing else than this wonderful gift of health I would love the West. But I have come to love it for other things—even spiritual things. Majesty, I have been studying you. I see and feel what this life has made of you. When I came I wondered at your strength, your virility, your serenity, your happiness. And I was stunned. I wondered at the causes of your change. Now I know

"See Here, Majesty Hammond, Do You Intend to Spend the Rest of Your Life in This Wilderness?"

You were sick of illness, sick of uselessness, if not of society—sick of the horrible noises and smells and contacts one can no longer escape in the cities. I am sick of all that, too, and I could tell you many women of our kind who suffer in a like manner. You have done what many of us want to do, but have not the courage. You have left it. I am not blind to the splendid difference you have made in your life. I think I would have discovered, even if your brother had not told me, what good you have done to the Mexicans and cattlemen of your range. Then you have work to do. That is much the secret of your happiness, is it not? Tell me. Tell me something of what it means to you?"

"Work, of course, has much to do with any one's happiness," replied Madeline. "No one can be happy who has no work. As regards myself—for the rest I can hardly tell you. I have never tried to put it in words. Frankly, I believe, if I had not had money that I could not have found such contentment here. That is not in any sense a judgment against the West. But if I had been poor I could not have bought and maintained my ranch. Stillwell tells me there are many larger ranches than mine, but none just like it. Then I am almost paying my expenses out of my business. Think of that! My income, instead of being wasted, is mostly saved. I think I hope I am useful, of course—my ranch and range are real, my cowboys are typical. If I were to tell you how I feel about them it would simply be a story of how Madeline Hammond sees the West. They are true to the West. It is I who am strange, and what I feel for them may be strange too. Edith, hold to your own impressions."

"But, Majesty, my impressions have changed. At first I did not like the wind, the dust, the sun, the endless open stretches. But now I do like them. Where once I saw only terrible wastes of barren ground now I see beauty and something noble. Then, at first, your cowboys struck me as dirty, rough, loud, crude, savage—all that was primitive. But I was wrong. I have changed. The dirt was only dust, and this desert dust is clean. They are still rough, loud, crude, and savage in my eyes, but with a difference. They are natural men. They are little children. Monty Price is one of nature's noblemen. The hard thing is to discover it. All his hideous person, all his actions and speech, are masks of his real nature. Nels is a joy, a simple, sweet, kindly, quiet man whom some woman should have loved. What would love have meant to him? He told me that no woman ever loved him except his mother, and he lost her when he was ten. Every man ought to be loved—especially such a man as Nels. Somehow his gun record does not impress me. I could believe he killed a man. Then take four foreman, Stewart. He is a cowboy, his work and life the same as the others. But he has education and most of the graces we are in the habit of saying make a gentleman. Stewart is a strange fellow, just like this strange country. He's a man, Majesty, and I admire him. So, you see, my impressions are developing with my stay out here, I like the country, I like the men. One reason I want to go home soon is because I am discontented enough at home now to think of falling in love with the West, for, dear, dear Majesty, I would. I could not live out here. And that brings me to my point. Admitting all the beauty and charm and wholesomeness and good of this wonderful country, still it is no place for you, Madeline Hammond. You have your position, your wealth, your name, your family. You must marry. You must have children. You must not give up all that for a quixotic life in a wilderness."

"I am, dear—I am. Edith, that I shall live here all the rest of my life."

"Oh, Majesty! I hate to preach this way. But I promised your mother I would talk to you. And the truth is I hate—I hate what I'm saying. I envy you your freedom, your peace. I know you have refused to marry Boyd Harvey. I could see that in his face. I believe you will refuse Castleton. Whom will you marry? What chance is there for a woman of your position to marry out here? What in the world will become of you?"

"Quien sabe?" replied Madeline, with a smile that was almost sad.

Not so many hours after this conversation with Edith Madeline sat with Boyd Harvey upon the grassy promontory overlooking the west, and she listened once again to his suave courtship.

Suddenly she turned to him and said, "Boyd, if I married you would you be willing—glad to spend the rest of your life here in the West?"

"Marry—you?" he asked. There was amaze in the voice usually so even and well modulated—amaze in the handsome face usually so indifferent. Her question had startled him. She saw him look down the iron-gray cliffs, over the barren slopes and cedared ridges beyond the cactus-covered foothills to the grim and ghastly desert. Just then, with its red veils of sunlit dust-clouds, its illimitable waste of ruined and upheaved earth, it was a sinister spectacle.

"No," he replied, with a tingle of shame in his cheek.

Madeline said no more, nor did he speak. She was spared the pain of refusing him, and she imagined he would never ask her again. There was both relief and regret in the conviction.

It was impossible not to like Boyd Harvey. He was handsome, young, rich, well born, pleasant, cultivated—he was all that made a gentleman of his class. He was considered a very desirable and eligible young man. Madeline admitted all this.

Then she thought of things that were perhaps exclusively her own strange ideas. Boyd Harvey's white skin did not tan even in this southwestern sun and wind. His hands were whiter than her own, and as soft. They were a proof that he never worked. His frame was tall, graceful, elegant. It did not bear evidence of ruggedness. He had never indulged in a sport more strenuous than yachting. He hated effort and activity. He rode horseback very little, disliked any but moderate motoring, spent much time in Newport and Europe, never walked when he could help it, and had no ambition unless it were to pass the days pleasantly. If he ever had any sons they would be like him, only a generation more toward the inevitable extinction of his race.

Madeline returned to camp in just the mood to make a sharp, deciding contrast. It happened—fatefully, perhaps—that the first man she saw was Stewart. Stewart was a combination of fire, strength, and action. These attributes seemed to cling about him. There was something vital and compelling in his presence. In him Madeline saw the strength of his forefathers unimpaired. The life in him was marvelously significant.

Madeline Hammond compared the man of the East with the man of the West; and that comparison was the last parting regret for her old standards.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Origin of Old Saying.

The saying, "Good Wine Needs No Bush," owes its origin to the ancient custom of hanging out an ivy bush at the doors of taverns—probably in honor of Bacchus, to whom the ivy was sacred—to inform travelers that "good cheer" might be found within. Many references to this custom are found in the old poets and dramatists. In Lily's "Euphues" are these lines: "Things of greatest profit are set forth with least price. Where wine is neat there needeth no ivie-bush."

CASTE IS STILL FACTOR IN INDIA

Not a Bar to Any Occupation, Though the Observance is Most Rigidly Enforced.

There are four main castes in India—the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras, corresponding traditionally to the occupations of priest, warrior, trader and artisan. But, though this would suggest that caste was at one time a class distinction, yet at the present day a caste may include all classes save that of priest, which is reserved to the Brahmans. Caste is no bar to any occupation. A rajah may be a Sudra. His cook may be a Brahman. The rajah is of a higher class than his cook, though of a very much lower caste. Also though the Brahman will cook the rajah's dinner he will not eat it with him, or permit his daughter to marry the rajah.

Though it is not looked upon with approval, marriage is possible between castes which are not widely separated. In particular, a legal marriage can take place between two contiguous castes. But in all such mixed marriages the children belong entirely to the low-caste.

Strange Experience.

I was straining a pailful of rainwater through a cloth. A little water filtered through the cloth, but presently, though the pail was still the heavy to be empty, the water stopped. I was exceedingly puzzled. Removing the cloth, I discovered there were huge frogs in the bottom of the pail.—Chicago Journal.

Date Palms in Southwest.

Date palms, originally brought from Egypt, have been growing in Arizona for 20 years. The early plantings at the University of Arizona, which have now come into full bearing, seem to prove that certain parts of the Southwest are particularly suited to date culture.

Cuticura Soap for the Complexion.

Nothing better than Cuticura Soap daily and Ointment now and then as needed to make the complexion clear, scalp clean and hands soft and white. Add to this the fascinating fragrant Cuticura Talcum, and you have the Cuticura Toilet Trio.—Advertisement.

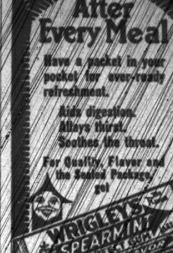
Even the hardened locomotive was to tender part.

WRIGLEY'S After Every Meal

Have a packet in your pocket for everyday refreshment.

Aids Digestion, Allays thirst, Soothes the throat.

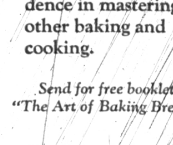
For Quality, Flavor and the Sealed Packages get



Be sure of good bread; use Yeast Foam

The knowledge of how to make bread gives a girl confidence in mastering other baking and cooking.

Send for free booklet "The Art of Baking Bread"



Northwestern Yeast Co.
1730 North Ashland Ave.
Chicago, Ill.

Possibly He Is Right.

Jud Tunkins says when he was a boy he thought maybe he'd be president of the United States—and he still thinks he has as good a chance as a lot of better-known candidates.

Silence may be golden, or it may indicate guilt.

Good Comparison.

"Gratitude is unknown out same as de moon in de restaurant," said Uncle Eben—"de bigger de dip, de louder de thank you."

Many actions are to procure fame, and are undertaken to obtainate happiness.

Why He Called It "Portland" Cement

In 1824, an English mason wanted to produce a better cement than any then in use. To do this he burned finely ground clay and limestone together at a high heat. The hard balls (called clinker) that resulted were ground to a fine powder. When a mixture of this dull gray powder with water had hardened, it was the color of a popular building stone quarried on the Isle of Portland off the coast of England. So this mason, Joseph Aspdin, called his discovery "portland" cement.

That was less than one hundred years ago.

Portland cement was not made in the United States until fifty years ago. The average annual production for the ten years following was only 36,000 sacks. Last year the country used over 470,000,000 sacks of portland cement. Capacity to manufacture was nearly 600,000,000 sacks.

Cement cannot be made everywhere because raw materials of the necessary chemical composition are not found in sufficient quantities in every part of the country. But it is now manufactured in 27 states by 120 plants. There is at least one of these plants within shipping distance of any community in this country.

To provide a cement supply that would always be ample to meet demand has meant a good deal in costly experience to those who have invested in the cement industry. There have been large capital investments with low returns.

In the last twenty-five years, 328 cement plants have been built or have gone through some stage of construction or financing. 162 were completed and placed in operation.

Only 120 of these plants have survived the financial, operating and marketing risks of that period. Their capacity is nearly 30 per cent greater than the record year's demand.

These are a few important facts about an industry that is still young. Advertisements to follow will give you more of these facts, and will tell something of the important place cement occupies in the welfare of every individual.

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