THURSDAY, JUNE 1920.

10.

Crooked Trails and Straight William MacLeod Raine

SYNOPSIS. Part 1.

Part 1. CHAPTER 1.-Adventurous and reck-iess, rather than criminal, and exdited by liquor, Curiy Flandrau and his chum. Mae, both practically mere boys, become involved in a horse stealing adventure. Disposing of the stolen stock in the town of Baguache, Ariz, the band separates, Quriy and his partner staying in town. They are awakened and toid a posse is in town in pursuit of them. They elude their pursues. Overtaken next day. Mae is killed by the posse and Curiy made splive, after he has shot one and him-self been wounded. The man shot is Luck Cullison. Luck Cullison.

CHAPTER II.-Cuillaon's friends, all cattlement, determine to lynch Curly as an example to cattle thereas. With the rope around fus nexts he is asived by the intervention of Kate Cuillaon, Luck's daughter daughter.

CHAPTER III --His wound dressed, and further violence not appreciencied, Curty is sent for by Cullison. He ques-tions the bay concerning a notorious out-law, Suspy Stone, real loader of the rus-thers who had been Curty's undoing Flandrau learns that Soary Stone is Cul-leon's bitter enemy and exercises a hale-ful influence over the exciseriff's son Nam, who has quarried with his father Cullison goes ball for Curty.

CHAPTER IV -Curly rescues Boapy Stone from a lear timp toto which be has stumbled, and discovers that the outlaw is young Saurs rivel for the hand of Lau-ia Landon, the gives Curly a note to deliver to Sam, and Flandrau and Stone set out for the latter's ranch.

CHAPTER V.-There Carly meets ble companions of the restling extedition and delivers Laura's note to Nam. Young Culling holoves Stone is his triend and says be will attick by tim. Flandrau sees some move is being platined and becomes convinced it is train robbery. Sum leaves the rambs to go to Sagnache. Curly ac-companies him. companies him.

CHAPTER VI. - Eavesdropping at a meeting place, Curly hears Stone and his licutenant, Lute Blackwell, arrange to hold up the train at a crossing known as Tin Cup, and after the robbery shoot young Cullison and leave his body on the scene. Stone thus glutting his revenge on the ex-sherift through his son's death and disgrare. Curly is accused by Stone of being a spy of Luck Cullison's. They are separated, but part with the understand-ing that their next meeting will mean a fight to the death. Curly makes a con-fidant of Dick Maloney, cattleman, and they inform Luck Cullison of Stone's plot against his son. CHAPTER VI - Eavesdropping at a against his son.

Part II.

CHAPTER L-After an all-night ses-sion at the Roundup club, in which Culli-son has lost heavily, there is an exchange of sharp words between Luck and a sheepnish, Cass Fendrick, with whom Cullison has a feud.

CHAPTER II.-Saguache is electrified by the news of the holdup of express messengers, the bandits securing \$25,000. Cullison pays his poker debits, and shortly afterward Mackenzie and Alex Flandrau, his closest friends, learn he is suspected of the express robbery, his hat having been found on the scene and he being withing

ablelded her dark head from the sun, appreclated the fituess of her surhim." roundings. She, too, was a flower of the desert, delicately fashioned, yet

vita with the bloom of health. A: the clatter of hoofs she looked up from the bush she was trimming and at once rose to her feet. Beneath their long inshes her upon some derik and hard. For the man who had drawn to a halt was Cass Fendrick. From the pocket of his shirt he drew. a crumpled piece of stained linen.

"I've brought back your handkerchief, Mins Cullison," "What have you done with my fa-

thery He nodded toward the Mexican boy and Kate dismissed the lad. When he had gone she asked her question again-

in exactly the same words. He swung from the horse and threw the rein to the ground. Then, sauntoring to the gate, he let himself in. "You've surely got a nice posy gar-

den here. Didn't know there was one like it in all sunbaked Arizona." She stood rigid. Her unfaltering eyes, sloe-black in the pale face, never lifted from him,

"I want you to tell me what you have done with my father."

He inughed a little and looked at her with eyes that narrowed like those of a cat basking in the sun. He had something the look of the larger members of the cat family-the soft tong tread, the compact rippling musles of a tame panther, and with these he threat that always lies behind its

leepy wariness. "You're a young lady of one idea. Vo use arguing with you, I reckon." "Not the least use. I've talked with Mrs. Wylle,"

He raised his cycbrows, "Do I know he lady?"

"She will know you. That is more to the point."

"Did she say she knew me?" he purred.

"She will say it in court-if it ever omes to that."

"Just what will she say, if you please?

Kate told him in four sentences with a stinging directness that was the outstanding note of her, that and a fine self-forgetful courage.

"Is that all? Comes to this then, that she says I heard her scream, ran in, and saved your father's life, is that a penitentiary offense?"

"You helped the villain take his body into the cettar. You plotted with him to hold father a prisoner *

"Says that, does she-that she heard us plotting?"

"Of course she did not overhear what you said. You took good care of that. But she knew you were conspiring.'

"Just naturally knew it without overhearing," he derided, "And of course if I was in a plot I must have been Johnny-on-the-spot a good deal of the time. Hung round there a-pienty, 1 expect?"

He had touched on the weak spot of "All Right; I'll Take You to Him." Mrs. Wylie's testimony. The man who had saved Cullison's life, after a long talk with Blackwell, had gone out of the Jack of Hearts and had not returned so far as she knew. For her former husband had sent her on an errand just before the prisoner was taken away and she did not know who

THE SPRINGFIELD NEWS

"But he wouldn't-not if you free

He laughed hurshly. "I thought you knew him. He's burd as nails." He laughed again, bitterly, "Not that it matters. Of course I was just putting a case. Nothing to it really,"

He was hedging because he thought he had gone too far, but she appeared not to notice it. Her eyes had the faraway look of one who communes with herself.

"If I could only see him and have a talk with him. I think I could get him to do as I ask. He nearly always does." Her gaze went swiftly back to him. "Let me talk with him. There's a reason why he ought to be free now. one that would appeal to him."

This was what he had come for, but now that she had met him half way he hesitated. If she should not succeed he would be worse off than before. He could neither hold her a prisoner nor free her to lead the pack of the law to his hiding place. On the other hand if Cuilison thought they intended 40 keep her prisoner he would have to compromise. He dared not leave her in the hands of Lute Blackwell, Fendrick decided to take a chance. At the worst he could turn them both free and leave for Sonora.

"All right. I'll take you to him. But you'll have to do as I say." "Yes," she agreed.

"You've got to persuade Luck to come through with an agreement to let go of that Del Oro homestead and to promise not to prosecute us. He won't do it to save his own life. He's got to think you come there as my prisoner. See? He's got to wrestle with the notion that you're in the

The tinkle of hoofs from the river hed in the gulch below rose through the clear air. The Mexican moved swiftly to the door and presently waved a hundkerchief.

"What gent are you wig-wagging to now?" Luck asked from the bed. "Thought I knew all you hold had bgndits by this time. Or is it Cass back again?'

"Yes, It's Cass. There's some one with him, too. It is a woman," the Mexican discovered in apparent surprise.

"A woman !" Luck took the cigar from his mouth in vague unease. "What is he doing here with a woman?"

The Mexican smiled behind his open hand. "Your question anticipates mine, scnor. I too ask the same."

The sight of his daughter in the doorway went through the cattleman with a chilling shock. She ran forward and with a pathetic cry of joy threw herself upon him where he stood. His hands were tled behind bim. Only by the turn of his head could he answer her caresses. There was a look of ineffable tenderness on his face, for he loved her more than anything else on earth.

"Mr. Fendrick brought me," she explained when articulate expression was possible.

"He brought you, did he?" Luck looked across her shoulder at his encury, and his eyes grew hard as Jade.

"Of my own free will," she added. "I promised you a better argument than those I'd given yeu. Miss Cullison

is that granment," Fendrick said. The enttleman's set face had a look more deadly than words. It told Fendrick he would gladly have killed him where he stood. For Luck knew he was concered and must yield. Neither Dominguez nor Blackwell would consent to let her leave otherwise.

"You've played a rotten trick on me, Fendrick. I wouldn't have thought it. even of a sheepman." -

"No use you getting cruzy with the heat, Cuilison. Your daughter asked me to bring her here, and I brought her. Of course I'm not going to break my neck getting her home where she can phone Bolt or Bucky O'Connor and have us rounded up. That ain't reasonable to expect. But I aim to do what's right. We'll all have supper together like sensible folks. Then lose and I will give you the cabin for the night if you'll promise not to attempt to escape. In the morning maye you'll see things different."

Fendrick calculated, not without reaon, that the best thing to do would he to give Kate a chance for a long private talk with her father.

After supper the door of the cabin was locked and a sentry posted. The prisoners were on parole, but Cass did not on that account relax his vigilance. For long he and his partner could hear a low murmur of voices from within the cabin. At length the lights went out and presently the voices died. Butall through the night one or the other hated the necessity that forced him to surrender. For himself he would have died rather than give way, but he had to think of his daughter and of his boy. Sam who was engaged in a plot to hold up a train,

His stony eyes met those of the man across the table. "No need for me to, tell you what I think of this. A white man wouldn't have done such a trick. It takes sheep herders and greasers to put across a thing so damnable as dragging a woman into a feud."

Fendrick flushed angrily. "It's not my fault; you're a plg-headed, obstinate chump. I used the only wespon left me."

Kate, standing straight and tall behind her father's chair, looked at their common foe with uncompromising scorn. "He is not to blame, dad. He can't help it because he doesn't see how despicable a thing he has done."

At exactly two o'clock Dominguez set the Cullisons on the homeward road. He fairly dripped apologies for the trouble to which he and his friends. had been compelled to put them.

Blackweil, who had arrived to take his turn as gnard, stood in the doorway and sulkily watched them go.

From the river bed below the departing guests looked up at the cabin hidden in the pines. The daughter was thanking God in her heart that the affair was ended. Her father was vowing to himself that it had just begun.

CHAPTER VII.

An Arrest.

After half a week in the saddle Lieutenant Bucky O'Connor of the Arizona®rangers and Curly Flandrau reached Saguache, tired and travelstained. They had combed the Rincons without having met hide or hair of the men they wanted. Early next morning they would leave town again and this time would make Sonpy Stone's horse ranch.

After reaching town the first thing each of them did was to take a bath. the second to get shaved. From the barber shop they went to the best restaurant in Saguache. Curly was still busy with his pie a la mode when Burridge Thomas, United States land commissioner for that district, took the seat opposite and told to O'Connor a most interesting plece of news.

They heard him to an end without interruption. Then Curly spoke one word. "Fendrick."

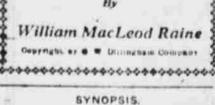
"Yes, sir. Cass Fendrick. Came in about one o'clock and handed me the relinquishment just as I've been telling you."

"Then filed on the claim himself, you said."

"Yes, took it up himself." "Sure the signature to the relinquishment was genuine?"

"I'd take oath to it. As soon as be had gone I got out the original filing and compared the two. Couldn't be any possible mistake. Nobody could have forged the signature. It is like Luck himself, strong and forceful and





missing.

CHAPTER 11. -Kate goes to Saguache for a consultation with Mackenzie. Alex Finndrau and Curiy. All are convinced of Luck's innocence. The shariff reveals that besides the finding of Cullison's hat, and his payment of his debts, Cass Fen-drick had seen the robber and is almost certain it was luck. Cullison is about to enter a homestead claim which will prac-tically put Fendrick out of business. CHAPTER III.-Kate goes to Saguache or a consultation with Mackenzie, Alex

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CHAPTER IV.-Kate's shrewdness re-vesis how Culliaon, had taken Fendrick's hat when he left the Roundup club, and suspicion points strongly to a frametip on Fendrick's part and to his being respon-sive for Luck's disappearance. The sher-iff receives a series of notes turning on the "Jack of Hearts" Curly finds a ci-gar store by that name and secures evi-dence that the proprietress, Mrs. Wyle, knows what happened to Luck.

CHAPTER V.-In the cellar of the cl-gar store Flandran finds a clipher mea-sage left by Cullison, and follows the scent. Luck is held prisoner by Fendrick and Blackwell in a sheep herder's cabin in the mountains. Fendrick wants him to sign a reitinguishment of his homestead within to mountain the prior of the scenae. rights, conditional to his release.

"Think I'm going to let you get away from here now? You'll sign and you'll promise to tell nothing you know against us."

Luck's answer came easily and lightly, "My friend, we've already discussed that point."

"You won't change your mind?" "Your arguments don't justify it. Cass."

The sheepman looked at him with a sinister significance. "Good enough, I'll bring you one that will justify it muy pronto."

CHAPTER VI.

Cass Fendrick Makes a Call.

Kate was in her rose garden superintending the stable boy as he loosened the dirt around the roots of some of the bushes. She had returned to the Circle C for a day or two to give some directions in the absence of her father. Buck and the other riders came to her for orders and took them without contempt. She knew the catthe business, and they knew she knew it. To a man they were proud of her. of her spirit, her energy, and her good looks.

The rider who cantered up to the fence, seeing her in her weil-hung corduroy skirt, her close-fitting blouse, and the broad-rimmed straw hat that

and heiped him. Kate was silent.

"How would this do for an explanation?" he suggested lazily. "We'll say just for the sake of argument that Mrs. Wylie's story is true, that I did save your father's life. We'll put it that I did help carry him downstairs where it was cooler and that I did have a long talk with the fellow Blackwell. What would I be talking to him about, if I wasn't reading the riot act to him? And after he had said he was sorry why shouldn't I hit the road out of there? There's no love lost between me and Luck Cullison. 1 wasn't under

any obligations to wrap him up in cotton and bring him back this side up with care to his anxious friends. If he chose later to take a hike out of town on p.d.q. hurry up business I ain't to blame. And I reckon you'll find a jury will agree with me." She brushed his explanation aside

with a woman's superb indifference to logic.

"You can talk of course. I don't care. It is all lies-lies. You have kidnsped father and are holding him somewhere. Don't you dare to hurt him. If you should-Oh, if you should -you will wish you had never been born." The fierceness of her passion beat upon him like sudden summer hall.

He forgot for the moment that he was a man with the tolls of the law closing upon him, forgot that his success and even his liberty were at stake. He saw only a girl with the hunger of love in her wisiful eyes, and knew that it lay in his power to bring back the laughter and the light into them.

"Suppose I can't fight fair any longer. Suppose I've let myself get trapped and it isn't up to me but to somebody else. Up to your father, say?"

"My father?"

"Yes. How could I turn him loose when the first thing he did would be to swear out a warrant for my arrest?"

power of the damnedest villain that ever went unhung. 1 mean Blackwell. Let him chew on that proposition a while and see what he makes of it." She nodded, white to the lips. "Let

us go at once, please." She called across to the corral: "Manuel, saddle the pinto for me. Hurry!"

They rode together through the wind-swept sunlit land. From time to time his lazy glance embraced her, a supple, graceful creature, at perfect case in the saddle. What was it about her that drew the eye so irresistibly? Prottier girls he had often seen. Her features were irregular, mouth and nose too large, face a little thin. Her contour lacked the softness, the allure that in some women was an uncopscions invitation to cuddle. Tough as whipcost she might be, but in her there flowed a life vital and strong; dwelt a spirit brave and unconquerable. She seemed to him as little subtle as any woman he had ever met. This directness came no doubt from living so far from feminine influences. But he had a feeling that if a man once wakened her love, the instinct of sex would spring full-grown into being.

Luck lay stretched full length on a bunk, his face to the roof, a wreath of smoke from his cigar traveling slowly toward the ceiling into a filmy blue cloud which hung above him. He looked the personification of vigorous full-blooded manhood at ease.

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By the table, facing him squarely sat Jose Dominguez, a nearly built Mexican with snapping Black eyes, a manner of pleasant suavity and an ever-ready sincle that displayed a double row of shining white teeth. That smile did not for an instant deceive Luck. He knew that Jose had no grudge against him, that he was a very respectable citizen, and that he would regretfully shoot him 'full of holes if occasion called for so drastic a termination to their acquaintance. For Dominguez had a third interest in the C. F. ranch and he was the last man in the world to sacrifice his business for sentiment. Having put the savings of a lifetime into the sheep business, he did not propose to let anybody deprive him of his profits, either legally or illegully.

the sheepmen patroled circled around and around the house.

Fendrick did not broach the subject at issue next morning till after breakfast.

"Well, what have you decided?" he asked at last.

"What is it you offer?" Luck demanded gruffly.

"You sign the relinquishment and agree not to make us any trouble because we brought you here, and you may go by two o'clock."

"Well, I accept your terms. I'll make you no legal trouble. But I tell you straight this thing ain't ended. It's only just begun. I'm going to run you out of this country before I'm through with you."

"Go to It. We'll see whether you make good."

"Where is that paper you want me to sign?"

Luck dashed off his signature and pushed the document from him. He



Luck Dashed Off His Signature.

decided." Bucky rose. "See you later, Curly. Sorry I have to hurry, Mr. Thomas, but I've thought of something I'll have to do right away."

Bucky followed El Molino street to' the old plaza and cut across it to the Hotel Wayland. Among the arrivals of the day was the entry he had hoped to see:

"Cass Fendrick, C. F. Ranch, Artzona."

The room that had been assigned to him was 212.

O'Connor turned away and went up the stairs, ignoring the elevator. On the second floor he found 212. In answer to his knock a voice said "Come in." Opening the door, he stepped in, closed it behind him and looked at the man lying in his shirt sieeves on the bed.

"Evening, Cass."

Fendrick put down his newspaper, but did not rise, "Evening Bucky,"

Their eyes held to each other with the level even gaze of men who recognize a worthy antagonist.

"I've come to ask a question or two."

"Kick them out."

"First, I would like to know what you paid Luck Cullison for his Del Oro claim."

"You better ask Cullison. The law says that if a man sells a relinquishment he can't file on another claim. If he surrenders it for nothing he can. Now, Luck may have notions of filing on another claim. You can see that we'll have to take it for granted he gave me the claim."

It was so neat an answer and at the same time so complete a one that O'Connor could not help appreciating it. He smiled and tried again.

"That leaves me only one thing to do. You're under arrest."

"For what?" demanded the sheepman sharply.

"For abducting Luck Cullison and holding him prisoner."

Lazily Cass drawled a question. "Are you right sure Cultison ain't at home attending to his business?" "Has he come back?"

(To be continued.)