

"Yes, they're Sioux! I must talk with them." "But they're coming," I rasped. "They're getting in range. We've got the gun, and twenty cartridges. May-be if I killed the chief—"

He called enquiringly: a greeting and a demand in one, it sounded. She replied. And what they two said, in word and sign, I could not know. Then he cantered back to his men, while

Edna stepped lightly down; answered my querying look. "It's all right. I'm going, and so are you," she said, with a faint smile, oddly subtle—a tremulous smile in a white face.

"Really I don't mind. The Indians are about the only persons left to me. You can go home, and I shall not be unhappy. Please believe that! The wife of a great chief is quite a per-

sonage—he won't inquire into my past. But if we try to stay here you will certainly be killed, and I shall suffer, and we shall gain nothing. You must take my money. Please do. Then good-bye. I told him I would come out, under his promise." (Concluded next week)

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A Smart Maid He kissed the parlor maid and the girl screamed. The wife came in and looked about suspiciously. "Fis, why did you scream?" "Through joy, madam. The master has just doubled my wages."

CHAPTER XI A Bargain for a Woman

At last Edna spoke in low, even tones. "What do you expect to do with me, please?" "We shall have to do whatever is best for yourself," I managed to answer. "That will be determined when we reach the stage line, I suppose."

Her voice had a quality of definite estimation which nettled, humbled, and isolated me, as if I lacked in some essential to a standard set. "Well at home you will live comfortably. You will need to wear no belt weapon. The police will protect you. You can marry the girl next door—or even take the chance of the one across the street, her parentage being come as it may. Your children will love to hear of the rough mule-whacker trail—yes, you will have great tales but you will not mention that you killed a man who tried to kill you and then rode for a night with a strange woman alone at your stirrup! Your course is the safe course. By all means take it, Mr. Beymer."

"That I shall do, madam," I retorted. "The West and I have not agreed. I wish to God I had never seen it—I did not conceive that I should have to take a human life—become an outlaw in the night, riding for refuge—"

"You deserve much sympathy," she remarked. "I lapsed into a turbulence of voiceless rage at myself. For a time our mules plodded with sundry snorts and stares as if they were seeing portents in the moonshine. Eventually their imaginings dulled, so that they now moved carelessly of where or why. I could not but be aware of my companion. Her hair glistened palely, for she rode bareheaded; her Mormon gown, tightened under her as she sat astride, revealed the lines of her boyish limbs.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "The fog. I don't know where we are." "Oh! I hadn't noticed." "I don't think there's any use in riding on," she said. "We've lost our bearings."

"You stay where you are," I ordered, staggering also as I hastily landed. "I'll make camp."

while," she whispered. "Adam's men trailing us?" "I hope not," she gasped, in sheer agony. "If we might only know in time!"

"The whole desert was a golden haze when having packed we climbed the fog fingered in patches. From patch to patch we threaded, with many a glance over shoulder. At last we came to a rough outcrop of red sandstone, looming rudely on our right. Edna quickly swerved toward it.

"The best chance. I see nothing else," she muttered. "We can tie the mules under cover, and wait. We'll surely be spied if we keep on." In a moment we had gained the refuge. The sculptured rock masses, detached one from another, several jutting ten feet up, received us. We tied the mules short, in a nook at the rear; and we ourselves crawled in until we lay snug against the shadowing buttresses with the desert vista opening before us.

"A war party! Sioux, I think," she said. "Don't they carry scalp on that first lance? They've been raiding the stage line. Do you see any squaws?" "No," I hazarded. "All warriors, I should guess." "All warriors. But squaws would be worse."

"On they cantered; indeed, seemed to be diverging from our ambush and making more to the west. And I had hopes that, after all, we were safe. Then her hand clutched mine firmly. A wolf had leaped from cover in the path of the file; leaped eastward across the desert, and instantly, with a whoop that echoed upon us like the crack of doom, a young fellow darted from the line in gay pursuit.

"Now they will come," I promised. "Yes," she murmured. "But after that—"

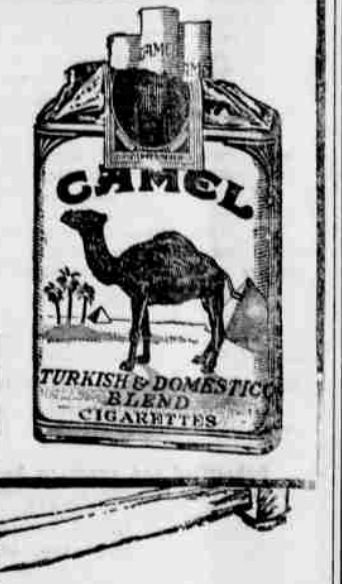
I had no reply. This contingency—we two facing Indians—was outside my calculations. "Shall we make a break for it?" I proposed. "It would be madness on these poor mules." She murmured to herself.

Table with 2 columns: Description and Amount. Title: REPORT OF CONDITION OF THE Farmers & Stockgrowers National Bank AT HEPPNER, IN THE STATE OF OREGON, AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON MARCH 23, 1927.

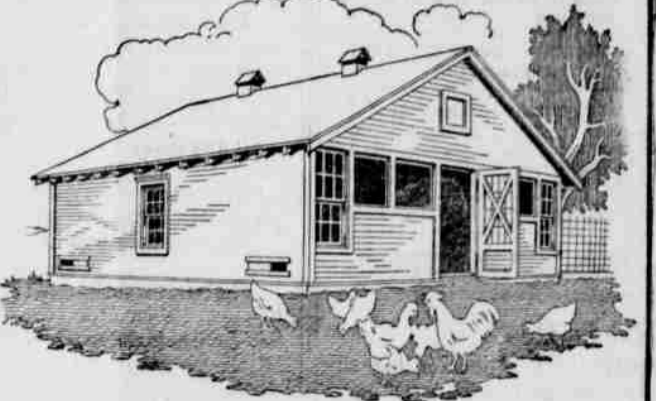
I, J. W. Beymer, President of the above-named bank, do solemnly swear that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. J. W. BEYMER, President.



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