

A Very Common Want.  
"Oh, of course," "Ah, yes," "No, no," these are familiar exclamations for the sufferer from indigestion, nervousness, and general debility. The remedy is a simple one, and the cure is a matter of time. The remedy is a simple one, and the cure is a matter of time. The remedy is a simple one, and the cure is a matter of time.

## ROYAL RANGER RALPH;

THE WAIF OF THE WESTERN PRAIRIES.

BY WELDON J. COBB.

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### RANGER RALPH'S ADVENTURES.

We left Ranger Ralph in a very peculiar position of peril and excitement, an occupant of one of the wagons the outlaw had secured from the attacked emigrant train.

As has been stated, the scout believed that his presence in the vehicle was not known in the territory.

He had crept thither, desperately wounded as he supposed, and while unconscious the wagon had started on its journey.

From what he saw and heard, the scout reasoned that Dalton had met a new section of Despard's outlaw band near the emigrant train, and they were all returning to the bandit's headquarters at Lone Canyon.

The plight was not a pleasant one to the scout. He discovered great peril and trouble should Despard carry him to his mountain home. More than once the old scout had led the vigilantes to the place, only to suffer defeat. The cause was usually impassable wagon guarded by the outlaws.

Even were the girl rescued, it would be difficult to pass through the country infested by hostile Indians. Still, the scout was glad the plot now centered at Lone Canyon. Here he knew the hermit Walcott lived.

The scout found that his wound, received at the onslaught on the emigrant train, while painful, was by no means serious. He lay securely hidden by the wagon, yet he could see his enemies on the seat and behind the wagon.

The course of the outlaws during the morning was over a prairie interspersed with trees. Toward evening they diverged to the mountains, entered Lone Canyon, and then followed the Pueblo River through the hills. It was just about dark when the scout halted at a place well known to the scout. As he peered from his covert he knew that he was in the vicinity of one of the hardest places in the territory. It was known as "Lone Canyon Tavern," and was kept by a man named Timmer, who, surrounded by fugitives from justice and criminals, safely defied the law in this isolated place.

The entire party had stopped here, and their noisy tones and clinking glasses could be heard from the bar-room a few minutes later.

The scout was about to shift his position, cramped position, and even meditated taking advantage of the gathering dusk to escape from the wagon, when he paused and listened.

Two men were passing the wagon and toward the saloon. They were conversing, and he heard one of them say:

"I understand Despard is going to divide and leave the business."

"Yes, when we get up to the den," responded the other.

"The scout's considerable plunder to divide."

"I should say so. He got a lot from the emigrant wagons."

"Clear money, yes."

"Where is it?"

"Maybe it's in this wagon."

"Why not?"

"They don't leave gold lying around loose."

One of the men, as if impelled by some whimsical curiosity, had placed his hand over the backboard of the wagon. Gropping among the hay, he uttered a startled exclamation.

"What is it?" asked his companion.

"There's some one in here."

"In the wagon?"

"Who is it?"

"Dunno, but it's some one."

"No, that's Ranger's business. I wonder if he knows who it is?"

"Maybe he's a friend of his. We'll tell him about it, anyway."

The man pulled vigorously at the scout's hair, and the latter uttered a cry of surprise and indignation.

"Drunk!" commented one of the men. They walked away toward the tavern.

The scout found that the discovery was only a question of time. He glanced toward the tavern and observed that several of the outlaws were hanging about the place in full sight of the wagon.

"If I could only start up the horses around the ledge of rocks there, I would escape of range and could escape," he thought.

Ranger Ralph chattered to the horses, and they instantly started. He had miscalculated what would occur, however.

The moment they turned the ledge of rocks the road led by a steep descent to the river. Unaided, and borne forward by the impetus of the horses, the horses dashed down this declivity in a way.

The scout sprang to his feet and started for the river. A swing of the vehicle dashed him against its sides, and he gave up all for lost: for the wagon pitched from side to side, lurched forward, and fell over the side. The scout was hurled into the air, and he landed on his back, and he was unable to rise.

The startled outlaws hurried after the wagon as they tumbled over the side. They saw the catastrophe, and heard the horses neigh wildly in terror as they struggled in midair. Then the tragedy was over. The scout disappeared under the water of the river.

The wagon struck the river, was submerged, and then with its living freight was borne from sight into the shadows of the canyon. The swift current of the Pueblo River.

CHAPTER XV.

WHITE PAIN.

The smoldering camp-fire of the Modocs burned low, and the spot where the triumphant savages had fired the smoke rose in a column of white smoke, and the air was filled with a soft, silvery light.

The least sanguine of the Indians would have sworn that their intended victim had perished the full penalty of his treachery in visiting their camp.

Yet the young scout had escaped. It was a marvelous combination of circumstances which led to his timely escape.

He had abandoned himself to his fate, and he had added a struggle utterly useless when the fire was lighted.

He saw the red light disappear.

He saw the fire creep upward—a hideous, menacing ser, set of flame—and he saw himself up for lost.

Suddenly he revived in his breast. His hands were loosed, and he was dragged back from the fire, and he turned to greet his unexpected rescuer.

A dark, expressive face peered into his own, a pair of mournful eyes met his.

"Fawn!" exclaimed Darrel, in surprise.

"The Indian maiden."

"Fawn!"

"I rescued me, Ah."

"The life of White."

"On horse."

"Black Crow."

"I saved Darrel."

"A face calls him."

"A Indian princess."

"He is, my most cruel enemy."

"Speak! What wrong has he done you?"

"Why would Eagle Eye know?"

"To avenge White Fawn's wrongs."

"You would do that?"

"Yes, for he has persecuted the friends of Eagle Eye."

The Indian maiden led Darrel to a spot near the river where they would not be discovered should the savages return. Then she told her simple, faithful story.

It seemed that a month previous she had been wedded at the camp of her father to the Jaguar, a chief of the peaceful Nez Percés.

The latter was to convey her to the reservation of his tribe, and left the wigwam of Shadow Snake loaded down with gold and jewels.

Darrel and his men were to convey them to their destination.

Instead, he robbed them, killed the Jaguar, as White Fawn believed, and imprisoned her in the cave whence Darrel had rescued her.

Here she had been guarded by one of Despard's men until the return of the latter from Lone Canyon. Then he had attempted to kill her.

Darrel asked the Indian girl why she did not go to her father with her story.

"Not till White Fawn is certain the Jaguar is dead, and until I have killed Black Crow," she replied, ominously.

She listened intently as Darrel related his own adventures with the bandit.

Then she said: "White Fawn knows where Black Crow has gone."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"To Lone Canyon."

"Is it far from here?"

"A night's journey."

"And you will guide me thither?"

"Yes."

Before an hour had passed Darrel knew that the intrepid White Fawn was a valuable and dauntless ally to his cause.

She seemed inspired with but one idea, and that was to confront the man who had wronged her so terribly.

White Fawn understood the country thoroughly, but they were not to pass many times they concealed themselves to avoid passing savages, and it was night when they came to the canyon where the stronghold of the bandits was located.

They skirted the gulch where the Lone Canyon tavern was situated, and descended into the valley guided by the light of the moon. The place was desolate and isolated in the extreme.

The moonlight showed the river with its towering hills on either side.

"Look!" said White Fawn. "Yonder is one of the hiding places of the pale-faced renegades."

Darrel saw a dilapidated log structure which seemed to be built out from an immense cave in the mountain.

"You think Despard is there?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Is his prisoner there, or near by. Remain here. White Fawn will soon return."

"Where are you going?" asked Darrel.

"To find out how many here are to learn how we may reach them."

She was gone like a flash. The moments sped by and Darrel anxiously awaited her return.

He was standing on a ledge of rocks which jutted out over the river, and vainly scanned the scene for some indication of the presence of his friend.

Suddenly, to his right and inland, he saw a light flash.

He began walking toward it, clambered over a rugged boulder, and was amazed to view a natural bridge in the landscape which resembled an immense pit.

Islands were almost perpendicular, and they were overspread with vines and bushes.

The light moved across the open space at the bottom of this indentation. Apparently, it was a lantern carried by some person.

Darrel observed that the place was directly back of the elevation in which the log cabin was located. It was evidently a part of the studio of the bandits. As he stood regarding the lantern curiously, it suddenly disappeared.

At the same moment, in leaping too far over the edge of the rock, he lost his balance and fell forward. Down he went, slightly breaking a very heavy fall by catching at the vines and shrubs. He landed at the bottom of the pit, badly bruised and half stunned.

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