

HEART OF THE SUNSET

By Rex Beach

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DAVE LAW STRIKES A TRAIL THAT LEADS HIM TO DEATH'S DOOR—HE SUFFERS HEAVY LOSS BUT DOESN'T TURN BACK

Mrs. Althea Austin, handsome young mistress of Las Palmas ranch, lost in the Texas desert, wanders into the little camp of David Law, state ranger, lying in ambush for a Mexican murderer. She is forced to stay 24 hours, until Law captures the murderer and escorts her home. "Young Ed" Austin, drunken wastrel, berates his wife and makes insulting insinuations about the ranger. Austin is secretly in league with Mexican robbers and horse thieves. Mrs. Austin starts for her other ranch, La Feria, in Mexican territory, to secure damages for cattle taken by Mexican soldiers, and encounters Carlos Luis-Longofo, who becomes instantly enamored of her beauty and personality, much to her embarrassment.

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

Law ventured to remark that none of Blaz's enemies had grown fat in prosecuting their feuds, but this was a subject which the elder man invariably found embarrassing, and now he said:

"Pshaw! I never was the blood-thirsty people think. I'm as gentle as a sheep." Then to escape further curiosity on that point, he suggested that they round out their nocturnal evening with a game of pool.

The next morning at breakfast Patoma announced, "Father, you must help Dave hunt down those cattle thieves."

"Ain't that sort of a big order?" Blaz queried.

"Perhaps, but you're the very man to do it. Ricardo Guzman is the only person who knows the Lewis gang as well as you do."

James shook his head doubtfully. "Don Ricardo has been working up his own private feud with that outfit. I was the kind that went looking for a fight. I wouldn't have paid freight on myself from the Panhandle down here. I could have got one right at home, any morning before breakfast."

"Ricardo Guzman is something of a black sheep himself," Law spoke up.

"Pshaw! He's all right. I reckon he has changed a few brands his time, but so has everybody else. Why, that 'old Ed' Austin got his start. If a cowboy takes he never stole anything, he's either a good liar or a bad rapper. But Ricardo's going straight enough now."

"He has lost his share of stock," Patoma explained, "and he'll work with you if father asks him. You go along with Dave."

"I'm too busy," Blaz demurred, "and I ain't feeling good. I had dreamed all night."

"I don't want you around me here this morning. That new dressmaker is coming."

James rose abruptly from the table. "I reckon my business can wait. Hustle up, Dave. A few moments later, as they were saddling their horses, he lamented: 'What did I tell you? Here I go on the dodge from a dressmaker. I s'pose I've got to live like a road-agent now, till something happens.'"

Don Ricardo Guzman was an American, but he spoke no English. An accident of birth had made him a citizen of the United States—his father having owned a ranch which lay partly instead of south of the Rio Grande. Inasmuch as the property had fallen to Ricardo, his sons, too, were Yankees in the eyes of the law. But in all other respects Don Ricardo and his family differed not at all from the many Guzmans who lived across the border. The Guzman ranch comprised a goodly number of acres, and, since the stock multiply rapidly, its owner had in some sort prospered. On the bank of a stream—a former bed of the Rio Grande—stood the house, an adobe structure, square, white and unpretentious from the sun-baked walls. Behind it were some brush cornals and a few scattered mud jacals, in which lived the help.

Ricardo had just risen from a siesta when his two visitors rode up, and made them welcome with the best he had. In the cool of the afternoon Ricardo rode with his visitors, and then, cordial relations being now established, he began to divulge information of value to Law.

Yes, he had endured many depredations from thieves. It was shameful, but doubtless God would that a certain amount of stealing should go on in the world. The thieves were certainly favored by nature, in this locality, for the great expanse of brush country to the north and east offered almost perfect security, and the river to the south gave immunity from pursuit or prosecution. The beavers were driven north into the wilderness, and the horses went to Mexico, where the war had created a market for them. The federals had plenty of money to buy mounts.

Whom did Don Ricardo suspect? The old man was noncommittal. Suspicion was one thing, proof was quite another; and conviction was difficult under the best of circumstances.

wise in his saddle, studying the country before him. Perhaps a half-mile away a long, narrow patch of woods, with the tops of occasional oaks showing far parallel with the fence for a considerable distance.

"They took them in yonder, to brand," he said, straightening himself. "Maybe we'll be in time."

Side by side the three men rode off. Guzman led, following the tracks to the nearest point of woods; then Law stopped to give his directions:

"Pedro, ride down this side. Ricardo, you skirt the outside. I shall keep to the middle. Walk your horses for I shall go slowly. With a dubious shake of the head Ricardo rode away, while Dave guided Bessie Belle into the grove.

CHAPTER VII.

A Ranger's Horse.

Outward through the dense foliage the three men rode. Now and then they stopped to listen, but the rain was heavy enough to drown all other noises. Encountering fresh tracks laid by Dave learned from his guide that the horses had been there half a mile when Bessie Belle raised her head, and he noted that her nostrils were working sensitively. Law fancied that he could detect the smell of a wood fire. Farther along they came to a place where the brush was low, and there, rising through the treetops beyond, he saw a waning plume of blue smoke.

"Dave, look! See into sight of the branding fire," with his repeater across his saddle horn and his thumb upon the hammer: what followed came with almost the blinding swiftness of a lightning crash. First there was the picture of a sandy glade, in the center of which burned a fire with branding irons in it, and a spotted calf tied to a tree, but otherwise no other sign of life. Then came the lance. Bessie Belle threw up her head in that characteristic trick of hers, and simultaneously Dave saw a figure rise out of the grass at his left with a rifle leveled.

"With the first look of the horse's head his own gun had leaped to his shoulder—he was not conscious of having willed it to do so—and even as he pressed the trigger he felt Bessie Belle give way. The next instant his feet, still in the stirrups, were off the ground and his horse lay between them, motionless.

"That nervous fling of her head had sent Dave's life, for the revolver's bullet had shattered her skull in its flight, and she lay prone, with scarcely a muscular twitch, so sudden had been her fall.

For the moment the Ranger was dazed. He stood staring down at his pet; then the truth engulfed him. He realized that he had ridden her to her death, and at the thought he became like a woman bereft of her child, like a lover who had seen his sweetheart slain.

A shout—it was a hoarse, inarticulate cry; a swift, maddened scurrying of his feet as he sought the ambush; then he was down beside the horse, calling her name heartbreakingly, his arms around her neck, his face against her warm, wet, velvet hide.

Law knew that two men had entered the blicket, and therefore one still remained to be reckoned with, but he gave no thought to that. From the corner of his eye he could see a pair of hooves start at him out of the grass, and they told him there was not need for investigation. Near the body he heard the calf stirring, but he let it struggle.

Bessie Belle's eight eyes were glazed; she did not hear her lover's voice. Don Ricardo and his son burst out of the brush from opposite directions almost at the same moment, to find the Ranger with his face buried in his horse's mane.

"Caraballo! What is this?" The old man flung himself from the saddle and came running. "You are injured?"

Law jerked his head in the direction of the fallen man at his back and Pedro uttered a loud cry.

"Look! Father and son ran through the grass, then reeled and broke into a tangle of oaths and exclamations.

"Right to the month! The fellow was in death before he realized it."

"See! It is as we thought, Pedro: one of Lewis! Tse! Tse! Tse! What a sight!"

"Who is he?" queried the officer.

"Pino Garcia, one of the worst!" cried the two Guzmans in his excitement. "I told you that Lewis knew something. The other one got past me, but I cannot shoot like this."

It was difficult to secure a connected story from Ricardo, but he finally made it plain that at the first report the other thief had fled, exposing himself only long enough for the old man to take a quick shot in his direction. Ricardo had missed, and the miscreant was doubtless well away by this time. He had ridden a sorrel horse, that was all Ricardo could remember.

Law looked only briefly at the gruesome results of his marksmanship, then he turned back to the body of his beloved mare, Ricardo noticed at length that he was crying; as the Ranger knelt beside the dead thoroughbred, the old Mexican whispered to his son:

"Valgame Dios! This is a strange fellow. He weeps like a woman. He must have loved that horse as a man loves his wife. Who can understand these gringos? After a time he approached cautiously and inquired: 'What shall we do with this horse, señor? Pedro has found his horse.'"

Law roused himself. With his own hands he gently removed Bessie Belle's saddle, bridle and blanket, then he gave his orders.

"I'll take your horse, Ricardo, and you take—that fellow's. Get a wagon and move him to Joseville."

"I'm going to follow that man on the sorrel."

The dead man's saddle was left beside the body; then when the exchange of man and horse had been effected and all was ready, Law made a request that amazed both father and son.

"If I'm not back by morning, I want you to bury my mare," his voice broke in a sob. "Bury her deep, Ricardo, so—the coyotes can't dig her up; right where she fell. I'll be back to see that it's done right. Understand?"

"Bury her," understood perfectly, she was a pretty horse. She was your bonita, eh? Well, you have a big heart, señor, as a brave man should have. Everything shall be done as you wish. I give you my hand on it. Ricardo reached down and gripped Law's palm. "We will name our pas-

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INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By B. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of the Sunday School Course in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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LESSON FOR APRIL 15

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

LESSON TEXT—John 10:1-17.
GOLDEN TEXT—I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep—John 10:11.

This lesson probably occurred at the Feast of the Tabernacle in October, A. D. 29. The place was Jerusalem, perhaps in or near the temple. Facts, pictures and illustrations regarding the shepherd life can be used effectively in teaching the lesson. The true teacher must inspire, develop and protect. Jesus does all of these things.

1. Jesus, the Door (vv. 1-10). Any one who tries to get access to the sheep any other way than through Jesus is a thief and a robber (v. 1). A door is an invitation to enter, to investigate, to purchase, to learn, to meet others. It is the proper entrance. It is a sign in through any other way is a house suspicious. It is also a means of safety to control those who enter. It can be closed in case of danger, and is strong to protect against storms and thieves. It is a means of separation, to insure privacy, and to furnish a means of egress. Jesus says we are to "go in" for communion with God, and to "go out" for service, to "go in" for strength and to "go out" your voice. Jesus is a wonderful verse. In it we have the simplicity of the Gospel, "I am the door," the exclusiveness of the Gospel, "By me," the conditions of the Gospel, "He that will," the certainty, "He saved," the liberty, "Go in and out," the provision, "Find pasture."

The true acceptance of Jesus leads not to a life of fear and constraint but to the perfect liberty of a child, separation in room and pasture (vs. 2-3). That never fail (Rev. 7:16-17). The world's richest pasture lands are bleak and barren wildernesses in comparison with this. Christ is the door to other things not mentioned in the text (See John 14:6; Eph. 2:18; Rom. 5:1-2; Heb. 10:19-22). By him we enter the room of the knowledge of God. The Christian's business is to know God and to use him known.

2. Jesus, the Good Shepherd (vv. 10-18). It is not enough to be a door. A door has no volition. It cannot leave its place. A shepherd can go in and out. A false Christ, and false shepherds, fire and thieves and robbers who come to "steal and kill and destroy." On the other hand, Jesus' mission was a glorious one, "I came that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." As a good Shepherd (1) he has courage (v. 12). Jesus was not only willing, but actually did give his life for the sheep. He had love for all of the sheep and was willing to seek the lost (Matt. 18:12). He also had confidence, due to his knowledge of God (v. 14). This is not audacity but quiet confidence due to experience. He knows the proper pasture. He knows where to find water for the sheep. He knows the dangers and pitfalls along the pathway. He knows how to direct our efforts. Sunday school teachers are following in the steps of the master, and who perform the acts of a good shepherd, must pay the price of knowledge. (2) Jesus had character (v. 15). He was right in the sight of God but in order to be right in the sight of God he must also be right in the sight of men. God expects results. The church expects results. The pastor who trusts their children to our teaching expects results. A shepherd does not live for himself. It lives for others. Unless it produces wool, and is good for meat, it has existed in vain; so God, the Father and the church expect of us, as under-shepherds, that we shall produce results. (This we do not have to do in our own strength for any of us may have the life which is "abundant" and "exceeding" and "beyond measure." The question is, have we this superabundant life? (See 1 Pet. 1:8; John 1:15; Col. 1:19; Eph. 3:10-14).

3. Jesus, the Good Shepherd (vv. 18-21). Doctor Torrey has called our attention to ten points about the good Shepherd. (1) He knows the sheep. (2) He is known by his sheep. (3) He has a personal interest in his sheep, calls each by name (v. 3). (4) He feeds them (v. 9). (5) He thrusts forth the lagging sheep (v. 4). (6) He overlooks none; all are his own (v. 4 R. V.). (7) He goeth before them. He has trodden every step of the way that they must take. (8) He carries them (v. 13). (9) He layeth down his life for the sheep (vv. 11 and 15). (10) Giveth eternal and abundant life to the sheep (vv. 10, 28, 29).

Jesus has sheep outside of Israel (v. 16). When these are brought in they will become one fold (Eph. 2:14, 15; Gal. 3:28). It is through hearing his voice that they are to be brought in. The laying down of his life was a voluntary act on his part, but it was performed in obedience to the father's will (See Chap. 8:33; 10:10). Jesus intended that his relative, his followers should be exactly like him, which bound himself to the Father (See Chap. 17:21-23).

This love of the Good Shepherd led him to lay down his life, and to be raised for our justification.

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which brought me out of it all right. I am now well and do all my housework, besides working in my garden. Several of my neighbors have got well by taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."—Mrs. VIOLA FINICAL, Wagoner, Okla.

Such warning symptoms as sense of suffocation, hot flashes, headaches, back-aches, dizziness, nervousness, irritability, weakness and dizziness should be heeded by middle-aged women. Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound has carried many women safely through the crisis.

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At a time when everyone is complaining of the high cost of living it might be well to see if we cannot eliminate two great sources of waste—rats and mice.

Most rats are needless. All rats are so. Some years ago a study of the rat problem in Philadelphia arrived at the conclusion that the rodents of that city are more than a million dollars' worth of food each year. At that rate, the disgusting creatures can hardly cost less than \$100,000,000 per year to the whole country. This is a pretty high price to pay for the consumption of impish pests which, besides their other bad habits, undermine floors and carry the most dreaded of all diseases, bubonic plague.

Yet, fires are more expensive than rats. In 1915—the last year for which figures are at hand—the American people paid out in premiums for fire insurance \$149,381,346. Of the vast sum at least three-fourths could be saved by reducing our fire record to the rate prevailing in England, France or Germany; and even in our time and nation \$200,000,000 per year is a very high price to pay for the consumption of impish pests which, besides their other bad habits, undermine floors and carry the most dreaded of all diseases, bubonic plague.

Not With His Money. "What are these eminent financiers doing?" "They are planning to mobilize the nation's dollars." "They are not." "Well, I've got \$18.50 in the bank. I'll just draw it out and show those fellows a thing or two."

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"There's a Reason"

Dave Law digs up startling evidence and Mrs. Austin finds her position at La Feria changed. Some important developments are described in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Buffalo Bill's First Indian. Col. William F. Cody tells in his book, "The Adventures of Buffalo Bill," published by the Harpers, the story of his first fight with Indians. It was in 1867, when he was only eleven years old, that he killed an Indian. He was accompanying some cattle-herders who were attacked on the San Platte river. The Indians stamped the cattle, killed three men and then charged on the rest. A volley stopped them for the moment and the herders were able to escape. The next morning the Indians were back and the next day the Indians were back and the next day the Indians were back.

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