



own into his bulging
 "Nuf!" I commend-
 "Nuf," echoed the
 ain, convulsive; and
 ated through bared
 "Mister."
 he growled.
 ment I sprang
 et. He lay for
 and slowly scram-
 faced me, his
 I heard the
 n and women.
 of his revolver
 own gun ex-
 how it came
 beheld him
 an aston-
 silence.
 hard, my
 gers and
 one posi-
 iddening
 revolver
 mless.
 ased.
 and kill-
 Hands
 thr-
 ear
 salty
 to kill
 He shot
 "Yes, yes," they said, soothing
 gruffly. "Shore he did; shore you
 didn't. It's all right. Come along,
 come along."
 Then—
 "Pick Beeson up. He's bad hurt,
 himself. See that blood? No, 'tain't
 his arm, is it? He's bleedin' internal.
 What's the hole? Wait—he's busted
 something."
 They would have carried me.
 "No," I cried, while their bearded
 faces swam. "He said 'Nuf'—he shot
 me afterward. Not bad, is it? I can
 walk."
 As they hustled me onward the
 world grown curiously darkened, and
 I dumbly wondered whether I was
 dying myself. Across a great distance
 we stumbled by the wagons and halt-
 ed at a fire.
 "You're all right," Jenks appar-
 ently had looked me over and was
 ministering to me. "Swallow this."
 The odor of whiskey fumed into
 my nostrils. I obediently swallowed.
 Hands were rummaging at my left
 arm; a bandage being wound about.
 "Did I kill him?" I besought. "Not
 that! I didn't aim—I don't know how
 I shot—but I had to. Didn't I?"
 "You did! He'll not bother you ag'n
 She's yourn."
 That hurt.
 "But it wasn't about her! He
 bullied me—dared me. We were man
 to man, boys. He made me fight
 him."
 "Yes, shore," they agreed—and
 they were not believing. They still
 had figured only as a transient occa-
 sion.
 Then she herself, My Lady, appear-
 ed, running in breathless and appeal-
 ing.
 "Is Mr. Beeson hurt? Badly?
 Where is he? Let me help."
 She knelt beside me, her hand
 grasped mine, she gazed wide-eyed
 and imploring.
 "No, he's all right, ma'am."
 "I'm all right, I assure you," I mum-
 bled thickly, and helpless as a babe to
 the clinging of her cold fingers.
 The group about me dissolved.
 Jenks seated himself close beside us.
 "Your arm won't trouble you," he
 said. "Jest a flesh wound. You two
 can eat and rest a bit, and if you set
 out 'fore moon-up you can easy get
 d'ar. We'll furnish mounts and grub
 and anything else you need."
 "Mounts!" I blurted. "Set out,"
 you say? You mean that I—we—

should run away? I'll not leave the
 train and neither shall she, until the
 proper time. Or do I understand that
 you disown us?"
 "Hold on," Jenks bade. "Tain't a
 question of disowin' you. But
 you've killed one o' the Marmons, the
 wagon boss's son; and when he comes
 in the hornin' demandin' of you for a
 trial by his Mormons, what can we do?
 We'll take the chance on sneakin' you
 both away, and facin' the old mon."
 "I think we'd best go," I agreed.
 "It's the only way."
 And it was. We were twain in
 menace to the outfit, and to each oth-
 er, but inseparable. We were yoked.
 The fact appalled. It gripped me
 coldly. I seemed to have bargained
 for her with fist and bullet, and won
 her; now I should appear to carry her
 off as my booty; a wife and a gamb-
 ler's wife. Yet such must be!
 "Moon'll be up in a couple o'
 hours," Jenks said. "I'd advise you
 to take an hour's start of it, so as to
 get away easier. If you travel
 straight southward you'll strike the
 stage road in the mornin'. When you
 reach a station you'll have choice
 either way."
 "I have money," she said; and sat
 erect.
 For the first half mile we rode
 without a word.
 What her thoughts were I might
 not know, but they sat heavy upon
 her, closing her throat with the tort-
 ure of vain, self-reproach. That
 much I sensed. But I could not re-
 assure her. My own thoughts were
 so grievous as to crush me with aching
 woe.
 This, then, was I: somebody who
 had just killed a man, had broken
 from the open trail and was riding,
 he knew not where, through darkness
 worse than night, himself an outlaw
 with an outlawed woman—at the best
 a chance woman, an adventuring wo-
 man—now the spoil of killing!

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 an-
 swer. "That will be determined when
 we reach the stage line, I suppose."
 "Thank you! Once at the stage line
 and I shall contrive. You must have
 no thought of me. I understand very
 well that we should not travel far in
 company—and you may not wish to
 go in my direction. You have plans
 of your own?"
 "None of any great moment. Every-
 thing has failed me, to date. There
 is only the one place left: New York
 State, where I came from."
 "You have one more place than I,"
 she replied.
 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 com-
 fortably. 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 comme il faut. 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.
 Beeson."
 "That I shall do, madam," I retort-
 ed. "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 like an
 outlaw in the night, riding for re-
 fuge—" And I choked passionately.
 "You deserve much sympathy,"
 she remarked.
 I lapsed into a turbulence of voice-
 less rage at myself.
 For a time our mules plodded with

sundry snorts and stares as if they
 were seeing portents in the moon-
 shine. Eventually their imaginings
 dulled, so that they now moved care-
 less of where or why.
 I could not but be aware of my
 companion. Her hair glistened palely,
 for she rode bareheaded; her Mor-
 mon gown, tightened under her as she
 sat astride, revealed the lines of her
 boyish limbs.
 She was a woman, in any guise;
 and I being a man, protect her I
 should, as far as necessary! I found
 myself wishing that we could upturn
 something pleasant to talk about!
 The drooping round of my thoughts
 revolved over and over, and I dozed,
 and kept dozing, until she spoke.
 "Hadn't we better stop?"
 That was a curious sensation.
 When I stared about, uncomprehend-
 ing, my view was shut off by a white-
 ness veiling the moon above and the
 earth below except immediately un-
 derneath my mule's hoofs.
 "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."
 "Yes, we'd better stop where we
 are," I agreed. "Then in the morn-
 ing we can take stock."
 She swung off before I had awk-
 wardly dismounted to help her. Her
 limbs failed—my own were clamped
 by stiffness—and she staggered and
 collapsed with a little laugh.
 "I'm tired," she confessed "Wait
 just a moment."



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"You stay where you are," I order-
 ed, staggering also as I hastily land-
 ed. "I'll make camp."
 But she would have none of that;
 pleaded my one-handedness and in-
 sisted upon cooperating at the mules.
 The animals were staked out, fell to
 nibbling.
 I sought a spot for our beds; laid
 down a buffalo robe for her and plac-
 ed her saddle as her pillow. She sank
 with a sigh, tucking her skirt under
 her, and I folded her robe over.
 Her face gazed up at me; she ex-
 tended her hand.
 "You are very kind, sir," she said,
 in a smile that pathetically curved her
 lips. There, at my knees, she looked
 so worn, so slight, so childish, so in-
 (Continued on page 3)

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	February, 1927 shipments greater than February, 1926	4106 cars

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