



CROOKED TRAILS AND STRAIGHT BY William MacLeod Raine

CHAPTER II.

At the End of the Road.

Curly's wooden face told nothing of what he was thinking. The first article of the creed of the frontier is to be a man. Good or bad, the last test of a man is the way he takes his medicine. So now young Flandrau ate his dinner with a hearty appetite, smoked cigarettes impassively, and occasionally chatted with his guards casually and as a matter of course. Deep within him was a terrible feeling of sickness at the disaster that had overwhelmed him, but he did not intend to play the quitter. As the day began to wear out two riders from the Bar Double M reached the ranch and were brought in to identify him as the horse thief. The two were Maloney and Kite Bonfils, neither of them friends of the young rustler. The foreman in particular was a wet blanket to his chances. "You've got the right man all right," he said to Buck without answering Flandrau's cool nod of recognition. "What sort of a reputation has he got?" Buck asked, lowering his voice a little. Kite did not take the trouble to lower his. "Bad. Always been a tough character. Friend of Bad Bill Cranston and Soapy Stone."

so dry that he had to keep moistening them with the tip of his tongue. Dutch had a new rope in his hand with a loop at one end. He tossed it over the boy's head and drew it taut. Two or three of the faces in the circle were almost as bloodless as that of the prisoner, but they were set to see the thing out. "Will you tell now?" Bonfils asked. Curly met him eye to eye. "No." "Come along, then." One of the men caught his arm at the place where he had been wounded. The rustler flinched. "Careful, Buck. Don't you see you're hurting his bad arm?" Sweeney said sharply. "I didn't aim to hurt him," Buck defended himself. Curly's senses had never been more alert. He noticed that Buck had on a red necktie that had got loose from his shirt and clamped up his neck. It had black polka dots and was badly frayed. Sweeney was chewing tobacco. He would have that chew in his mouth after they had finished what they were going to do. "Ain't he the gamest ever?" some one whispered. The rustler heard the words and they braced him as a drink of whisky does a man who has been on a bad spree. "Better do it at the cottonwoods down by the creek," Buck told Bonfils in a low voice. The foreman of the Bar Double M moved his head in assent. "All right. Let's get it over quick as we can." A sound of flying feet came from outside. Some one smothered an oath of surprise. Kate Cullison stood in the doorway, all out of breath and panting. "What is it?" They had not a word to say for themselves. In that room were some of the most callous hearts in the territory. Not one man in a million could have fazed them, but this slender girl dumfounded them. Her gaze settled on Buck. His wandering for help to Sweeney, to Jake, to Kite Bonfils, "Now look-a-here, Miss Kate," Sweeney began to explain. But she swept his remonstrance aside. "No—No—No!" Her voice gathered strength with each repetition of the word. "I won't have it. What are you thinking about?" "It's a rustler, Miss Kate; belongs to Soapy Stone's outfit," Sweeney answered the girl. "Can you prove it?" "We got him double cinched." "Then let the law put him in prison." "He shot yore paw," Buck reminded her. "Is that why you're doing it?" "Yes'm," and "That's why," they nodded. Like a flash she took advantage of their admission. "Then I've got more against him than you have, and I say turn him over to the law."



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gram he would have guessed Maloney each time. "Now that you've relieved your mind proper, Miss Cullison, I expect any of the boys will be glad to escort you back to the house," Kite suggested with an acid smile. "What have you got to do with this?" she flamed. "Our boys took him. They brought him here as their prisoner. Do you think we'll let you come over into this county and dictate everything we do?" "I've got a notion tucked away that you're trying to do the dictating your own self," the Bar Double M man contradicted. "I'm not. But I won't stand by while you get these boys to do murder." Kite laughed sarcastically. "You hear your boss, boys." "You've had yore say now, Miss Kate. I reckon you better say good-night," advised Buck. She handed Buck and his friends her compliments in a swift flow of feminine ferocity. Maloney pushed into the circle. "She's dead right, boys. There's nothing to this lynching game. He's only a kid." The tide of opinion was shifting. Those who had been worked up by the lynching by the arguments of Bonfils began to resent his activity. Flandrau was their prisoner, wasn't he? No use going off half-cocked. Some of them were discovering that they were not half so anxious to hang him as they had supposed. The girl turned to her friends and neighbors. "I oughtn't to have talked to you that way, but you know how worried I am about dad," she apologized with a catch in her breath. "I'm sure you didn't think or you would never have done anything to trouble me more just now. You know I didn't half mean it." She looked from one to another, her eyes shiny with tears. "I know that no braver or kinder man live than you. Why, you're my folks. I've been brought up among you. And so you've got to forgive me." Some said "Sure," others told her to forget it, and one grass widower drew a laugh by saying that her little spiel reminded him of happier days. "I'm so glad you've changed your mind. I knew you would when you thought it over," she told them chaffily and confidentially. She was taking their assent for granted. Now she waited and gave them a chance to chorus their agreement. None of them spoke except Maloney. Most of them were with her in sympathy but none wanted to be first in giving way. She looked around from one to another, still cheerful and sure of her ground apparently. Two steps brought her directly in front of one. She caught him by the lapels of his coat and looked straight into his eyes. "You have changed your mind, haven't you, Jake?" The big Missourian twisted his hat in embarrassment. "Sure. Whatever's right suits me." "Well, you know what is right, don't you?" "I expect." "Then you won't hurt this man, our prisoner?" "I haven't a thing against him if you haven't." "Then you won't hurt him? You won't stand by and let the other boys do it?" "Now, Miss Kate—" She burst into sudden tears. "I thought you were my friend, but now I'm in trouble—you think only of making it worse." Jake gave in immediately and the rest followed like a flock of sheep. Two or three of the promises came hard, but she did not stop till each one individually had pledged himself. The young man she had saved could not keep his eyes from her. He would have liked to kneel down and kiss the edge of her dress and put his curly head in the dust before her. The ice in his heart had melted in the warmth of a great emotion. She was standing close to him talking to Buck when he spoke in a low voice. "I reckon I can't tell you—how much I'm obliged to you, miss." She drew back quickly as if he had been a snake about to strike, but he had instinctively gathered her skirts so that they would not brush against him. "I don't want your thanks," she told him, and her voice was like the drench of an icy wave. But when she saw the hurt in his eyes she hesitated. Perhaps she guessed that he was human after all, for an impulse carried her forward to take the rope from his neck. While his heart beat twice her soft fingers touched his throat and grazed his cheek. Then she turned and was gone from the room. It was a long time before the bunkhouse quieted. Curly, faint with weariness, lay down and tried to sleep. His arm was painful a good deal and he felt feverish. The men of the Circle C and their guests sat down and argued the whole thing over. But after a time the doctor came in and had the patient carried to the house. He was put in a good clean bed and his arm dressed again. The doctor brought him good news. "Cullison is doing fine. He ought to make it all right." Curly thought about the girl who had fought for his life. "You'll not let him die, Doc," he begged. "He's too tough" for that, Luck Cullison is. Presently Doctor Brown gave him a sleeping powder and left him. Soon after that Curly fell asleep and dreamed about a slim dark girl with fine long-lashed eyes that could be both tender and ferocious.

CHAPTER III. The Cullisons, and Laura London.

Curly was awakened by the sound of the cook beating the call to breakfast on a triangle. Buck was standing beside the bed. "How're they coming this glad morning, son?" he inquired with a grin. "Fine and dandy," grinned back Flandrau. "How is Cullison?" "Good as the wheat, doc says. Mighty lucky for Mr. C. Flandrau that he is. Say, I'm to be yore valley and help you into them clothes. Git a wiggle on you." Buck escorted his prisoner over to the ranch messhouse. The others had finished breakfast but Maloney was still eating. His mouth was full of hot cakes, but he nodded across at Curly in a casual friendly way. "How's the villain in the play this morning?" he inquired. Twenty-one usually looks on the cheerful side of life. Curly had forgotten for the moment about what had happened to his friend Mac. He did not remember that he was in the shadow of a penitentiary sentence. The sun was shining out of a deep blue sky. The vigor of youth flowed through his veins. He was hungry and a good breakfast was before him. For the present these were enough. "Me, I'm feeling a heap better than I was last night," he admitted. "Come pretty near losing you out of the cast, didn't we?" "Might a-turned out that way if the stage manager had not remembered the right cue in time." The heart of the prisoner went out to this man who was reaching a hand to him in his trouble. He had always known that Maloney was true and steady as a snubbing post, but he had not looked for any kindness from him. "Kite just got a telephone message from Saguache," the Bar Double M man went on easily. "Your friends that bought the rustled stock didn't get away with the goods. Seems they stumbled into a bunch of rurales unexpected and had to pull their freight sudden." "Make their getaway?" Curly inquired as indifferently as he could. But in spite of himself a note of eagerness crept into his voice. For if the men had escaped that would be two less witnesses against him. "Yep." "Too bad. If they hadn't I could have proved by them I was not one of the men who sold them the stock," Flandrau replied. "Like h— you could," Buck snorted, then grinned at his prisoner in a shamefaced way. "You're a good one, son." Jake stuck his head in at the door. "Buck, you're needed to help with them two-year-olds. The old man wants to have a talk with the rustler. Doc says he may. Maloney, will you take him up to the house?" Maloney had once ridden for the Circle C and was friendly with all the men on the place. He nodded. "Sure." A Mexican woman let them into the chamber where the wounded man lay. Kate was bending over the bed rearranging the pillows, but she looked up quickly when the two men entered. Her eyes were still gentle with the love that had been shining down from them upon her father. Cullison spoke. "Sit down, Dick." And to his prisoner: "You too." Flandrau saw close at hand for the first time the man who had been Arizona's most famous fighting sheriff. Luck Cullison was well-built and of medium height, of a dark complexion, clean-shaven, wiry and muscular. Already past forty, he looked not a day more than fifty. One glance was enough to tell Curly the kind of man this was. The power of him found expression in the gray steel-chilled eyes that bored into the young outlaw. "You have begun early, young fellow," he said quietly. "But never mind



"You Have Begun Early, Young Fellow," He Said Quietly. that. I don't ask you to convict yourself. I sent for you to tell you I don't blame you for this." He touched the wound in his side. "Different with your boys, sir." "So the boys are a little excited, are they?" "They were last night, anyhow," Curly answered, with a glimmer of a smile. Cullison looked quickly at Maloney and then at his daughter. "I'll listen to what you've been hiding from me," he told them. "Oh, the boys had notions, Miss Kate argued with them and they saw things different," the Bar Double M rider explained. But Cullison would not let it go at that. He made them tell him the whole

story. When Curly and Maloney had finished he buried his daughter's little hand in his big brown fist. His eyes were dancing with pride, but he gave her not a word of spoken praise. "Kate spoke to Curly. 'Father wants me to tell you that we don't blame you for shooting at him. We understand just how it was. Your friend got excited and shot as soon as he saw he was surrounded. We are both very sorry he was killed. Father could not stop the boys in time. Perhaps you remember that he tried to get you to surrender.'" The rustler nodded. "Yes, I heard him holler to me to put my gun down, but the others' blazed away at me." "And so you naturally defended yourself. Father wants it made clear that he feels you could have done nothing else." "Much obliged. I've been sorry ever since I hit him, and not only on my own account." "Then none of us need to hold hard feelings." The girl looked at her father, who answered her appeal with a grim nod, and then she turned again to the young rustler a little timidly. "I wonder if you would mind if I asked you a question." "You've earned the right to ask as many as you like." "It's about— We have been told you know the man they call Soapy Stone. Is that true?" Flandrau's eyes took on a stony look. It was as if something had sponged all the boyishness from his face. Still trying to get him to give away his partners in the rustling, were they? Well, he would show them he could take his medicine without squealing. "Your boys were asking that question about Soapy last night. They had a rope round my neck at the time. Nothing unfriendly in the matter, of course. Just a casual interest in my doings." Cullison was looking at him with the steel eyes that bored into him like a gimlet. Now he spoke sharply. "I've got an account running with Soapy Stone. Some day I'll settle it, likely. But that ain't the point now. Do you know his friends—the bunch he trails with?" Weariness still seemed to crouch in the cool eyes of Flandrau. "And if I say yes, I'll bet your next question will be about the time and the place I last saw them." Kate picked up a photograph from the table and handed it to the prisoner. "We're not interested in his friends—except one of them. Did you ever see the boy that sat for that picture?" The print was a snapshot of a boy about nineteen, a bright-faced handsome fellow, a little sulky around the mouth but with a pair of straight honest eyes. Curly shook his head slowly. Yet he was vaguely reminded of some one he new. Glancing up, he found instantly the clue to what had puzzled him. The young man in the picture was like Kate Cullison, like her father, too, for his mother. "He's your brother." The words were out before Flandrau could stop them. "Yes. You've never met him?" "No." Cullison had been watching the young man steadily. "Never saw him with Soapy Stone?" "No." "Never heard Stone speak of Sam Cullison?" "No. Soapy doesn't talk much about who his friends are." The ex-sheriff nodded. "I've met him." Of course he had met him. Curly knew the story of how in one drive he had made a gather of outlaws that had brought fame to him. Soapy had broken through the net, but the sheriff had followed him into the hills alone and run him to earth. What passed between the men nobody ever found out. Stone had repeatedly given it out that he could not be taken alive. But Cullison had brought him down to the valley bound and cowed. In due season the bandits had gone over the road to Yuma. Soapy and the others had sworn to get their revenge some day. Now they were back in the hills at their old tricks. Was it possible that Cullison's son was with them, caught in a trap during some drunken frolic just as Curly had been? In what way could Stone pay more fully the debt of hate he owed the former sheriff than by making his son a villain?

They were derived from agricultural terms, as Cicero from "cicer," a chick-pea, and Fabius from "faba," a bean, etc. THIS IS SOME PIG He is a Good Bird Dog, Having Been Adopted by a Pointer. Natchez, Miss.—Tucker Gibson, champion big game hunter of Texas parish, Louisiana, claims he owns a pig which he uses in the capacity of a bird dog, and says that the pig makes perfect stands and never flushes a covey of birds. Gibson says that soon after the birth of the pig, on the death of its mother, it was adopted by a pointer dog with a litter of young puppies, and that the pig still associated with its foster brothers and sisters even after it became well grown. He says the hunting proclivities of the pig were discovered accidentally the first time the young dogs were taken to the field, the pig accompanying the party and taking an animated part in the hunt. Million Packets of Flower Seeds Free We believe in flowers around the homes of the South. Flowers brighten up the home surroundings and give pleasure and satisfaction to those who have them. We have filled more than a million packets of seeds, of beautiful yet easily grown flowers to be given to our customers this spring for the beautifying of their homes. Wouldn't you like to have five packets of beautiful flowers free? YOU CAN GET THEM! Hastings' 1921 catalog is a 116-page handsomely illustrated seed book with twenty beautiful pages showing the finest varieties in their true natural colors. It is full of helpful garden, flower and farm information that is needed in every home, and, too, the catalog tells you how to get these flower seeds absolutely free. Write for our 1921 catalog now. It is the finest, most valuable and beautiful seed book ever published, and you will be mighty glad you've got it. There is no obligation to buy anything. Just ask for the catalog. H. G. HASTINGS, CO., SEEDSMEN, AT LANTA, GA. The Old Year-- TO BE SURE we appreciate the business given us by our customers and friends during 1920. Our business for the year has been quite good and we thank you for it. It could have been bigger, but we have no strenuous kid-glove customers as well as new that we will appreciate your business, be it great or small. SERVICE OUR WATCHWORD And Service it will be. If you want an article under the head of Hardware we either will have it or will get it for you the shortest possible time, and you'll find that our Service will be supplied most cheerfully, and that our prices are most modest. Come to see us often. York Hardware Co. The Years' End Has been reached. Some of us can look back on it with pleasure, others with some regrets, but after all and all in all, it has not been a bad year. Not a few of us who were living when the year began, are here yet—that's something. We have much to be thankful for—for health, our friends, a county in which there is no suffering for the necessities of life and a few other items that could be mentioned. We can all find some things to be thankful for, and we may profit by our disappointments and let us— TURN TO THE NEW YEAR With a will to win, to forget past disappointments, trials and troubles and look to the future with an eye to better and bigger things. We'll forget the disappointments of the year 1920 in two or three years and profiting by experience will find that it was not as bad in many respects as it might have been. Here we hope that YOU and YOURS may all have a bright, happy New Year. YORK DRUG STORE WE SELL SHOES AND THEY ARE GOOD SHOES, TOO The Bostonian, the Selz and the Lion Brand for men, and Hogue and Montgomery Shoes for Ladies. Better see us for SHOES. Also see us for OVERALLS, WORK SHIRTS and HEAVY UNDERWEAR. WAGONS AND BUGGIES We sell the well known and time-tried White Hickory Wagons and the Blount and High Point Buggies—better wagons and buggies are not sold hereabouts. Also we sell Wagon and Buggy Harness, Whips and Lap Robes. TO BE SURE WE SELL Flour, Meal, Sweet Feed, Mill Feed, Rice Flour and Apple Seed Oats. We have BROWN SUGAR. J. F. CARROLL REFLECTIONS OF 1920 It has been a whole lot better year to most of us, perhaps, than it might have been had we made it ourselves. Oh, yes, some of us have been a bit disappointed, but then disappointments are often but passing incidents. We forget them when something else fills the gap. We have our friends and the good will of friends to be thankful for, and we appreciate that. We appreciate their patronage during this closing year, and we look forward to another year with some hopes, but no actual promise of its being better than the last. But we are hopeful anyway—optimistic, if you please. And we are not only hoping for better things for ourselves, we are hoping that the New Year will bring YOU better and bigger things. W. E. FERGUSON Titles to Real Estate and Real Estate Mortgages at The Enquirer office.

PYRAMID PAINT SHOP ROCK HILL, S. C. Automobile Tops. It is the top of the automobile of course, that conducts to real comfort. If the overhead and the curtains are not in first-class shape there is no comfort. You cannot get your tops put in proper shape just anywhere or by just anybody, because just anybody DOES NOT KNOW HOW to do this work. Automobile Tops is our leading specialty. We are prepared to do absolutely everything that is needed in connection with them and we have workmen who know their business. We don't ask the builders of the automobiles any odds in this regard, and you may bring your work to us with the assurance that it is not a temporary makeshift, you are after, but the REAL THING. JAS. A. JOHNSON, Prop. We Wish to Thank-- OUR CUSTOMERS and those whom we expect to be customers, for the liberal patronage given our GASOLINE AND OIL SERVICE STATION. Since we opened up, and we wish to say that we will continue to give the same service in the same way in the future as we have in the past. GASOLINE, OIL AND ALL KINDS OF GREASES. Dodge, Parts, Buggies and Wagons. J. H. CARROLL The End of the Year And what a year. But it has not all been sadness. For the things we have had the pleasure of serving more customers than in any year since we have been in York. We have made a larger number of friends and customers, and we assure every one that we appreciate the business given us. FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1921. We extend the season's compliments and our best wishes to everybody for the New Year will bring a large measure of happiness and prosperity. We begin the New Year with hopes of brighter conditions and with the assurance that we will do everything in our power to merit the patronage we have had in the past and hope for in the future. Feinstein Bargain House The Growing Store Our Pre-Holiday Sale WILL BE CONTINUED ONLY A FEW DAYS LONGER. YOU HAD BETTER TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE BARGAINS WE ARE OFFERING NOW. HAVE YOU DONE ANY CHRISTMAS SHOPPING YET? D. M. PARROTT CLOVER'S LEADING DRY GOODS HOUSE SALES! SALES! YES, SALES! Everywhere. Yes, and I want to reduce my stock, too. But it is not my purpose to unload my high cost merchandise, or to give away some of that kind, too. I want—until the big wholesale bargain counters gave up a lot of their lowest priced and then I bought more goods and they are here for you and you'll admit that I am offering you real bargains in everything. The prices I am offering today are twice the prices of the before-the-war prices that you hear a lot of people talk about. My sale prices will make your cotton worth just about 35 cents a pound in its real buying power. SALE IS ON—RIGHT NOW! We'll tell you more about it within a few days and you can judge value for yourself, but in the meantime do not wait. Just come here for your needs, look over our stock, ask our prices and if they are not interesting and as good as you'll find, why then of course you are not going to buy, but still we feel sure we will sell you. J. D. HOPE, Sharon, S. C. TAX NOTICE—1920-1921 Office of the County Treasurer of York County. York, S. C., Oct. 8, 1920. NOTICE is hereby given that the TAX BOOKS for York County will be opened on FRIDAY, the 15TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1920, and remain open until the 31ST DAY OF DECEMBER, 1920, for the collection of STATE, COUNTY, SCHOOL and LOCAL TAXES, for the fiscal year 1920, without penalty; after which day ONE PER CENT penalty will be added to the amount due, and on the 15TH DAY OF MARCH, 1921, and after this date all unpaid taxes will go into execution and all unpaid Single Polls will be turned over to the several Magistrates for prosecution in accordance with law. All of the Banks of the county will offer their accommodations and facilities to Taxpayers who may desire to make use of the same, and I shall take pleasure in giving prompt attention to all correspondence on the subject. All Taxpayers appearing at my office will receive prompt attention. Note—The Tax Books will be made up by Townships, and parties writing about Taxes will always expedite matters by giving prompt attention to all correspondence on the subject. HARRY E. NEIL, Treasurer of York County. 81 Fri. tt.