

DESERT GOLD

by ZANE GREY Author of Riders of the Purple Sage, Wildfire, Etc.



Illustrations by Irwin Myers

CHAPTER IX

An Interrupted Siesta.

No man ever had a more eloquent and beautiful pleader for his cause than had Dick Gale in Mercedes Castaneda. Nell lay in the hammock, her hands behind her head, with rosy cheeks and arch eyes. Indeed she looked rebellious.

Dick was inclined to be rebellious himself. Belding had kept the rangers in off the line, and therefore Dick had been idle most of the time, and though he tried hard, he had been unable to stay far from Nell's vicinity. He believed she cared for him; but he could not catch her alone long enough to verify his tormenting hope. He had long before enlisted the loyal Mercedes in his cause; but in spite of this Nell had been more than a match for them both.

Gale pondered over an idea he had long revolved in mind, and which now suddenly gave place to a decision that made his heart swell and his cheek burn. He went in search of Mrs. Belding, and found her busy in the kitchen.

The relation between Gale and Mrs. Belding had subtly and incomprehensibly changed. He understood her less than when at first he divined an antagonism in her. If such a thing were possible she had retained the antagonism while seeming to yield to some influence that must have been fondness for him. Gale had come to care greatly for Nell's mother. Not only was she the comfort and strength of her home, but also of the inhabitants of Fortorn River. Indian, Mexican, American were all the same to her in trouble or illness; and then she was nurse, doctor, peacemaker, helper. She was good and noble, and there was not a child or grownup in Fortorn River who did not love and bless her. But Mrs. Belding did not seem happy. She seldom smiled, and never laughed. There was always a soft, sad, hurt look in her eyes. Gale often wondered if there had been other tragedy in her life than the supposed loss of her father in the desert.

Mrs. Belding heard Dick's step as he entered the kitchen, and, looking up, greeted him.

"Mother," began Dick, earnestly. Belding called her that, and so did Ladd and Lesh, but it was the first time for Dick. "Mother—I want to speak to you."

The only indication Mrs. Belding gave of being startled was in her eyes, which darkened, shadowed with multiplying thought.

"I love Nell," went on Dick, simply, "and I want you to let me ask her to be my wife."

Mrs. Belding's face blanched to a deathly white. Gale, thinking with surprise and concern that she was going to faint, moved quickly toward her, took her arm.

"Forgive me, I was blunt. . . . But I thought you knew."

"I've known for a long time," replied Mrs. Belding. Her voice was steady, and there was no evidence of agitation except in her pallor. "Then you—you haven't spoken to Nell?"

Dick laughed. "I've been trying to get a chance to tell her. I haven't had it yet. But she knows, I hope, I almost believe Nell cares a little for me."

"I've known that, too, for a long time," said Mrs. Belding, low almost as a whisper.

"You know?" cried Dick, with a glow and rush of feeling. "Mother! You'll give her to me?"

She drew him to the light and looked with strange, piercing intensity into his face. Gale had never dreamed a woman's eyes could hold such a world of thought and feeling. It seemed all the sweetness of life was there, and all the pain.

"Dick Gale, you want my Nell? You love her just as she is—her sweetness—her goodness?—Just herself, body and soul? . . . There's nothing could change you—nothing?"

"Dear Mrs. Belding, I love Nell for herself. If she loves me I'll be the happiest of men. There's absolutely nothing that could make any difference in me."

CHAPTER X

Rejoice.

No word from George Thorne had come to Fortorn River in weeks. Gale grew concerned over the fact, and began to wonder if anything serious could have happened to him. Mercedes showed a slow, wearing strain.

Thorne's commission expired the end of January, and if he could not get his discharge immediately, he surely could obtain leave of absence. Therefore, Gale waited, not without growing anxiety, and did his best to cheer Mercedes. The first of February came bringing news of rebel activities and bandit operations in and around Casita, but not a word from the cavalryman.

A dozen times Gale declared he would ride in to Casita and find out why they did not hear from Thorne; however, older and wiser heads prevailed over his impetuosity. Belding and the rangers and the Yaqui held a consultation. Not only had the Indian become a faithful servant to Gale, but he was also of value to Belding. Yaqui had all the craft of his class, and superior intelligence. His knowledge of Mexicans was second only to his hate of them. And Yaqui, who had been scouting on all the trails, gave information that made Belding decide to wait some days before sending anyone to Casita.

It was upon Gale's coming from this conference that he encountered Nell. Since the interrupted siesta episode she had been more than ordinarily elusive, and about all he had received from her was a tantalizing smile from a distance. He got the impression now, however, that she had awaited him. When he drew close to her he was certain of it, and he experienced more than surprise.

"Dick," she began, hurriedly. "Mercedes is dying by inches. Can't you see what ails her? It's more than love or fear. It's uncertainty—suspense. Oh, can't we find out for her?"

"Nell, I feel as badly as you about her. I wanted to ride to Casita. Belding shut me up quick, the last time."

Nell came close to Gale, clasped his arm. There was no color in her face. Her eyes held a dark, eager excitement.

"Dick, will you slip off without Dad's consent? Risk it! Go to Casita and find out what's happened to Thorne—at least if he ever started for Fortorn River?"

"No, Nell, I won't do that." She drew away from him with passionate suddenness.

"Are you afraid?" This certainly was not the Nell Burton that Dick knew.

"No, I'm not afraid," Gale replied, a little nettled.

"Will you go—for my sake?" Like lightning her mood changed and she was close to him again, hands on his, her face white, her whole presence sweetly alluring.

"Nell, I won't disobey Belding," protested Gale. "I won't break my word."

"Dick, it'll not be so bad as that. But—what if it is? . . . Go, Dick, if not for poor Mercedes' sake, then for mine—to please me. I'll—I'll . . . you won't lose anything by going. I think I know how Mercedes feels. Just a word from Thorne or about him would save her. Take Blanco Sol and go, Dick. What rebel outfit could ever ride you down on that horse? Why, Dick, if I was up on Sol I wouldn't be afraid of the whole rebel army."

Gale could only stare at this transformed girl.

"Dick, listen! . . . If you go—if you fetch some word of Thorne to comfort Mercedes, you—well, you will have your reward. Dick, will you go?"

"No—no!" cried Gale, in violence, struggling with himself. "Nell Burton, I'll tell you this. To have the reward I want would mean pretty near heaven for me. But not even for that will I break my word to your father."

She seemed the incarnation of girlish scorn and willful passion.

"Gracias, señor," she replied, mockingly. "Adios." Then she flashed out of his sight.

garded her calmly. "I've interrupted your siesta again," he said. "Please forgive me. I'll take myself off."

He wandered away, and when it became impossible for him to stay away any longer he returned to the patio.

The instant his glance rested upon Nell's face he divined she was feigning sleep. Dick dropped upon his knees and bent over her. He wanted more than anything he had ever wanted in his life to see if she would keep up that pretense of sleep and let him kiss her. She must have felt his breath, for her hair waved off her brow. Her cheeks were now white. Her breast swelled and sank. He bent down closer—closer. But he must have been maddeningly slow, for as he bent still closer Nell's eyes opened, and he caught a swift purple gaze of eyes—as she whirled her head. Then, with a little cry, she rose and fled.

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IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. E. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.) Copyright, 1922, Western Newspaper Union.

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 10

THE STORY OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

LESSON TEXT—Luke 10:25-37. GOLDEN TEXT—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Lev. 19:18. PRIMARY TOPIC—Showing Kindness to a Stranger. JUNIOR TOPIC—The Story of the Good Samaritan. INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Being a Good Neighbor. YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Who is My Neighbor?

1. How to Inherit Eternal Life (vv. 25-28).

1. The Lawyer's Question (v. 29). "Lawyer" here means one versed in religious law—the Scriptures. This does not mean lawyer in our modern sense of that term. It would more nearly correspond to a theological professor. The lawyer's object was to trap Jesus—to induce Him to take such a stand as would weaken His influence as a teacher. He expected Jesus to set forth some new ceremonies which would conflict with or disparage the law.

2. Jesus' Question (v. 26). Though Jesus knew the motive of the lawyer He did not evade his question. He sent him to the law—the field which was familiar to him. He thus was robbed of his own weapon.

3. The Lawyer's Reply (v. 27). He made an intelligent answer declaring that the entire content of the law was embraced in love to God and man. This expresses the whole of human duty.

4. Jesus Reply (v. 28). This straightforward answer went to the heart of the lawyer. Perfect love to God and man is truly the way of life. No man has yet had or can have such love. His sinful condition precludes its possibility. Man's failure to measure up to this requirement is his condemnation. The lawyer keenly felt this thrust. He was defeated on his own grounds and convicted of guilt.

11. Who is My Neighbor (vv. 29-37).

1. The Lawyer's Question (v. 29). This question reveals the insincerity of the lawyer. Christ's answer had reached his conscience and now he seeks to escape the difficulty by asking a captious question. Lawyer-like he sought to get off by raising a question as to the meaning of words.

2. Jesus' Answer (vv. 30-37). Christ's reply more than answered the lawyer's question. In the parable of the Good Samaritan He made clear who is a neighbor, and also what it means to be a neighbor, or what loving a neighbor means. Christ's answer had a double meaning. He not only made clear who is my neighbor, but made it clear that the lawyer was not playing the neighbor. He thus was convicted of not having been a neighbor.

(1) Who is my neighbor? This destitute and wounded man left on the highway by the robbers is the man who needs a neighbor. My neighbor, therefore, is the one who needs my help, whether he lives next door or on the outside of the world. Those who have the Spirit of Christ can see their neighbors on every hand.

(2) What being a neighbor means. Our supreme concern should not be "Who is my neighbor?" but "Whose neighbor am I?" To be a neighbor is (a) to see those about us who need help (v. 33). Love is keen to discern need. We should be on the lookout for those in need of our help.

(b) Have compassion on the needy (v. 33). Christ's compassion was aroused as He came into contact with those who were suffering and in need. All those who have His nature will be likewise moved. (c) Give to those in need (v. 34). Many are willing to give money to help the poor and needy, but are unwilling to personally minister to them. Many times the personal touch is more important than the material aid. We should give ourselves as well as our money. (1) Bind up wounds (v. 34). (e) Set the helpless ones on our beasts while we walk (v. 34). This is proof that love is genuine. Christians will deny themselves in order to have something to give to those who have need. This kind of sympathy is greatly needed today. (f) Bring to the inn and take care of the unfortunate (v. 34). Genuine love does not leave its service incomplete. Much Christian service is spasmodic, helps and then leaves a man to take care of himself. (g) Give money (v. 35). It costs a good deal to be a neighbor. Love is the most expensive thing in the world. It cost God His only Son. It cost Christ His life. May we go and do likewise!

(3) Who is my neighbor? This destitute and wounded man left on the highway by the robbers is the man who needs a neighbor. My neighbor, therefore, is the one who needs my help, whether he lives next door or on the outside of the world. Those who have the Spirit of Christ can see their neighbors on every hand.

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FOR DOWN AND OUTS

New Hotel is Started in Denver For Them.

A complete modern hotel for the "down and out" is to be opened in Denver, Colorado, by "Jim" Goodheart, of the city welfare bureau.

With 300 comfortable, clean rooms, all having hot and cold water, good at least as fit as when we received them. To this end we should feed and exercise their minds as well as their bodies, else we shall restore them to the stern competition of life outside primary object of prisons.

Within the last twelve months changes have been effected in the treatment of convicts that would have been regarded as revolutionary a few years ago. These are all in the direction of recognizing that even convicts are human beings, and that the punishment of the inmates is not the primary objects of prisons.

The broad arrow, everywhere known as the badge of the convict, no longer appears on prison garments. They have now no distinctive markings. Neither is it any longer insisted that the hair of convicts be clipped close to the scalp. The rules prohibiting conversation between prisoners while at work have been greatly relaxed. Convicts are no longer required to receive their visitors from the outside world behind bars or wire netting.

HAMBONE'S MEDITATIONS

WEN DE BOSS PAY ME WAGES AH AIN' NEVUH GOT NOTHIN' COMIN' TO ME, BUT EF HE JES' GIMME A DOLLAH NOW EN DEN AH'S ALLUZ GOT SUMPN IN SIGHT!



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To be sure you can wait; but it is really not a good idea to do so. Weather conditions are such that you are needing new Clothing, Dresses, Coat Suits, Overcoats, Shoes, Underwear, etc. Prices are now as low as they are going to be soon, with everything favoring sharp advances. Yes, to be sure it is time to buy and this STORE is the best place to buy—Others will tell you so.

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beds and attractive furniture, the new hostelry will rank as one of the most adequately equipped charitable establishments in the country, it is believed.

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"A man who sleeps in the park can't be made to have much respect for himself," Goodheart says.

—Montreal's bachelor tax, yielding \$100,000 a year, was voted down. The vote stood 23 to 8 in support of an appeal to the provincial legislature to repeal the law.

—Legislation is proposed in England that will compel girls under sixteen to wear their hair loose, plaited or hanging down their backs.

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J. F. CARROLL

NOTICE TO CREDITORS OF APPLICATION FOR DISCHARGE. In the District Court of the United States—For the Western District of South Carolina.

IN THE MATTER OF J. M. McGUIR & C. R. McGUIR, Copartners under the Firm Name of J. M. & C. R. McGUIR, Hickory Grove, S. C., Bankrupts.

TAKE notice that on November 14th, 1922, the above named bankrupt filed their petition in said Court praying that they may be decreed by the Court to have a full discharge from all debts provable against their estate, except such debts as are excepted by law from such discharge, and a hearing was thereupon ordered and will be had upon said petition on December 13, 1922, before said Court, at Greenville in said District, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon, at which time and place all known creditors and other persons in interest may appear and show cause, if any they have, why the prayer of said petition should not be granted.

Dated at Greenville, S. C., Nov. 14, 1922. J. C. DURHAM, Clerk.

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