



**FIFTEENTH INSTALMENT**  
**SYNOPSIS:** Ruth Warren, who lived in the East is willed three-fourth interest in the "Dead Lantern" ranch in Arizona by her only brother who is reported to have met his death while on business in Mexico. Arriving in Arizona with her husband who has ailing lungs and their small child, they learn that the ranch is located 85 miles from the nearest railroad. Old Charley Thane, rancher and rural mail carrier agrees to take them to the "Dead Lantern" gate, 5 miles from the ranch house. As they trudge wearily through a gulch approaching the ranch house, a voice whispers "Go back! . . . Go back!" At the ranch house they are greeted suspiciously by the gaunt rancher partner, Snavelly, and Indian Ann, a herculean woman of mixed negro and indian blood. Snavelly is difficult to understand but regardless, Ruth takes up the task of trying to adjust their three lives to the ranch and its development. Kenneth, Ruth's husband, caught in chilling rain contracts pneumonia and passes away before a doctor arrives. Ruth tries to carry on. She is not encouraged by Snavelly in plans to try and stock the ranch or improve it. She writes to her father in the East asking a loan with which to buy cattle. She receives no reply. Will Thane comes home to visit his father and Ruth meets him. A rancher nearby decides to retire and offers to sell Ruth and Snavelly his livestock on credit. Snavelly tries to balk the deal but Ruth buys to the limit of her three-quarter interest in Dead Lantern ranch.

**NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY**  
 "You see," explained Will, "The rain that falls between the top of the mountain range and the dike sinks into the ground and goes down to bedrock. But it can't get past the dike and is impounded under the surface. Where the wall crosses this arroyo is the lowest point, and it's there we found wet sand last year."  
 They came up to the dike. Fifty feet above the arroyo bed it rose, forming a water fall during rains, and below was a great sandy hole. The bottom of this hole was damp.  
 Ruth could hardly conceal her disappointment—she had pictured a pleasant little pool, and the bottom of the sandy hole looked as though some one had spilled half a pail of water there, twenty minutes before. But Will was boyishly enthusiastic. "There she is! Believe me, when you find a damp place in this weather, there's something doing."

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When Alfredo and Don Francisco came with the shovels, Will directed them in excellent Spanish to dig from the damp spot toward the wall. In less than a half hour there was real water at the bottom of the trench.  
 She and Will returned to the barn for a rock drill and a sledge—the plan was to drill through the dike into the water beyond.  
 Will and Alfredo took turns at swinging the sledge, while Don Francisco held the drill, giving it a quarter turn at each stroke. The drill sank in steadily; at every blow a little more water trickled around the inch-thick bar of steel. Snavelly, Ann and the Mexican woman came to look.  
 Four hours after they had begun, the sound of sledge on drill began to change subtly—"It's coming; We're almost—through!" Will's voice was tense with excitement as he swung the sledge. A few more strokes, and the drill shot in six inches at one blow.  
 No one made a sound. Will dropped the sledge. Every eye was on Don Francisco. With both hands he worked the drill up and down to loosen it. Slowly he pulled it out and as it came, water spouted around it in ever increasing volume. The drill was out and a muddy spout of water struck the sand three feet away from the wall.  
 Every one, from David to old Don Francisco, made some kind of noise. Ruth hugged the first person at hand, until she discovered it was Snavelly. And even Snavelly shook hands all around—real running water was too much for the old cattleman.  
 No one slept that night. They kept the fire going for its light and sat around watching the spout of water. Every now and then, some one took a drink, and although the water was still quite muddy, declared that it was probably the purest water in Arizona. With the proper troughs it would water every head of stock the Dead Lantern could ever carry and, incidentally, although Ruth did not suspect it, the value of the ranch had increased by some thousands of dollars since that last blow from Will's sledge.  
 By daylight a temporary dam had been thrown across the arroyo for the use of the cattle until the water could be piped to a permanent pond. Snavelly had actually helped to build this dam. But when the cattle had been driven up the arroyo and every one was going back to the ranch house for breakfast, Ruth sensed that Snavelly was rapidly returning to normal.  
 After the midday meal Ruth and David accompanied Will to the mail box to meet Old Charley. Before they left, however, Will had to take a last look at the water. Not a single cow was at the pond; they had all had their water and now scattered over the pasture.  
 On the way to the mail box the three friends talked incessantly. David rode with Will.  
 It was when Old Charley's car appeared far down the highway that Will said, "I'm planning a little joke on Dad. He is always kidding me about leaving the ranch for the city—I know that he hopes some day I'll come home for good and help him raise cattle. There's a piece of homestead property which joins our place on the east and yours on the south—he's always hinting that I ought to take it up before anyone else does. He watches that section like a hawk. Well, here's the point, I'm not saying

anything to Dad, but this trip I'm going to pull stakes at Los Angeles and come home for good. I expect to get back about a month before the round-up and I'm not going to say a word to Dad but just sneak out to that homestead and put up a shack and live there. It'll be a kick when he discovers somebody squatting on that choice section of his."  
 The girl laughed. "Be careful he doesn't take a shot at you before he discovers who it is."  
 Old Charley honked the horn as he sighted the three by the mail box. Ruth turned to Will. "It seems dreadfully inadequate to say 'thank you'—"  
 "Good Lord! I've had the time of my life!"  
 Ruth looked at his feet. "I shall remember that the Dead Lantern owes you a pair of shoes, not to mention trousers—why didn't I think to lend you some overalls?"  
 He laughed, as Old Charley turned from the road. "All right, Ruth, but I'll be needing boots instead of shoes the next time you see me."  
 Within a week after the development of the water the summer rains had begun. Almost every afternoon brought a brief shower; great, cold, pelting drops making the desert sparkle, redolent with the perfume of greasewood. Usually after these showers, the sun shone for a time before it slipped behind the mountains—as though to remind the desert that it still was master. There had been two severe storms which turned the arroyos and gullies into angry little rivers. All the deepened ponds were full to overflowing and water lay in small natural pools in many of the deeper canons.  
 The cattle were everywhere—there was so much water that they could go where the feed was choicest and they made good use of the opportunity. The remains of the cottonseed meal was stored in the barn and the band of bottle-fed calves was scattered. Already, every animal on the place seemed two-thirds fat.  
 The Mexicans worked on their house—Ruth knew that they were happy and would stay indefinitely. Every evening for an hour after supper she and the girl Magda had lessons in Spanish and English. When the hour was up Ruth went back to the ranch house, for, as the end of the lesson approached, Alfredo always picked up his guitar and stood near the door, his eye on the fresno outside.  
 Snavelly seemed to have changed subtly since the discovery of the water. Ruth sensed that he had begun to regard her in a different way; it was as if she had proved that she was not to be frightened, she could no longer be treated as a child. She had shown him that she knew something about ranching; and, since the drouth was safely past, that she stood a chance of meeting her note. But the girl knew that Snavelly was far from becoming reconciled to her presence on the ranch; he hated her and he hated the Mexicans.  
 Another thing about this strange man had come to her notice; he seemed to be looking at the old well whenever he was near the ranch house. Ruth had never seen him go there since he had built the board fence around it; but many times she had watched him coming up the path from the barn with his narrowed eyes on the clump of bushes by the woodpile.  
 There was much riding to do, as there always is after the summer rains. Ruth was so busy that she still had five books to read of the half dozen Will had sent her. Each morning she rode out with Don Francisco and Alfredo, often accompanied by David.  
 Every fifth day she carried a slip of paper with numbers from one to twenty-two and rode until she had checked all of the bulls. The white numbers on their sides were still glaringly conspicuous—sometimes she could check six or seven animals all within a mile as she looked carefully from a hilltop. She still considered her system of marking very fine.  
 The summer rains, having been unusually generous, had gradually ceased except for an occasional thunderstorm which hurried over the San Jorge Valley. On the Dead Lantern the natural surface water in ravine and canon was fast disappearing and the cattle were drifting to the neighborhood of the ponds.  
 Late one afternoon Ruth and Alfredo were returning from the south pasture driving a poor-grade heifer. The heifer was to be butchered and it is axiomatic among cattle owners that

only the off-color, the dish-faced, the knock-kneed, and the sway-backed shall be served at the family board.  
 When they were crossing the last deep ravine before reaching the ranch house, Ruth rode toward the mountains, leaving Alfredo to bring in the heifer alone. There had been water in a pool farther up the ravine the week before and Ruth wished to look at the cattle which would remain in the vicinity as long as the water lasted. She met few cattle in the ravine and upon arriving at the pool found it empty. As she rode out of the ravine along the side of an entering gully and neared the upper level, her eye caught a white object hidden among the undergrowth in the gully bottom farther ahead. Presently she saw that the object was a numeral six painted upon the reddish-brown side of a bull. The animal appeared to be lying stretched out, and even though she could see little distinctly through the clumps of cat claw and ocatillo, Ruth felt with a quick tightening at her throat that the bull's position was unnatural. Dismounting, she half walked, half slid, to the bottom of the gully and picked her way toward the bull. As she approached, half a dozen great buzzards flapped into the air on reluctant wings.  
 The next morning she and the two Mexicans returned to discover if possible why Number Six had died. Don Francisco and Alfredo held a long consultation together but could come to no definite conclusion—some sickness such as comes to the strongest of things. As the three companions rode on, the black buzzards slowly circled into the gully.  
 Suddenly Alfredo pointed southward. A group of buzzards were wheeling low above an oak tree which rose from the entrance of a gully in the opposite bank of the ravine.  
 By noon, five more dead animals had been found within a radius of a

mile. Ruth, half sick with anxiety, rode back to the ranch house for Snavelly who had remained at the corals shoeing horses.  
 The old cattleman listened to what she had to say, then shrugged. "You're liable to find a dead cow or two most any time—too bad about the bull, but they'll die just the same as anything else."  
 "But we've found six altogether—al recently dead!"  
 Snavelly grew more attentive. "Six—five besides the bull?"  
 "Yes."  
 "Well, now, that don't look so good. Here, I'll just saddle up an' have a look."  
 He shook his head after he had studied the carcass of Number Six. The buzzards had eaten very little, but they did not go far away. "I don't know just what to make of it—maybe if we could find a fresher one. Still it ain't black leg, anybody could tell that. Don't look like he'd been hurt in no fight, neither."  
 "Mr. Snavelly," said Ruth as they rode toward the oak tree where several buzzards stood or walked about, "you will have to be going into town for supplies soon anyway—why not go to-morrow and send out a doctor—a veterinary?"  
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NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR THE BUSY FARMER  
 At an auction sale of livestock at Bancroft, twelve cows were disposed of at an average price of \$12.00 per head.  
 —One farmer in Elgin County, where there is a storage of water, reports that raiders came at night and stole the water from his well. All he has left is a hole in the ground and that is not of much use to a thirsty cow.  
 For the third year in succession Simcoe County has captured the potato championship of Canada with Dooleys. James Harvey Giffen, Elm-vale, who was successful last year, again was first in the competition at the Royal Winter Fair, Toronto, but as he had taken the award previously, he was not eligible to accept the prize of a solid gold watch. The watch, however, went to Simcoe County, as the second place went to J. T. Cassin of Alliston, well known potato grower and expert, who receives the award. The award is for the best half-bushel of potatoes at the Fair. The honor was first brought to Simcoe County by Edmond Maurice, Lafontaine, in 1931, in 1932 by Mr. Giffen, and in 1933 by Mr. Giffen and Mr. Cassin.  
 The Alliston Herald says there is an acute shortage of feed for livestock in the country round about there. Unfinished cattle and brood sows are being included in the livestock shipments because of the lack of feed which is practically universal in the whole district. Though last summer's hay crop was above the average farmers were forced by the almost unprecedented dry spell in July, August and early September, to use up much of their hay that had been harvested earlier in the season for feed to sustain the cattle that were unable to get sufficient sustenance from the pastures. Farm after farm where usually two, four or six steers are fed for beef the following June, have empty stalls this winter because of lack of feed, and many farmers have found it necessary to reduce the number of hogs they usually have in preparation for the market.

**Official Crop Report**  
 The dry bean acreage this year is placed at 52,300 acres, with an average of 14.9 bushels per acre, giving an estimated total production of 779,300 bushels against a five-year average production of 1,027,000 bushels. The bean crop was very spotty and the yield extremely variable. The price being received by growers is considerably more than last year and in spite of a much smaller crop, financial returns will be larger than last year.  
 Sugar beets are yielding better than weather conditions early in the season indicated. The acreage shows some reduction from last year being 33,300 in 1932 and 31,900 this year. Production in 1932 was estimated at 333,000 tons and in 1933 at 319,000 tons, with an acreage yield of 10 tons per acre both years. The average

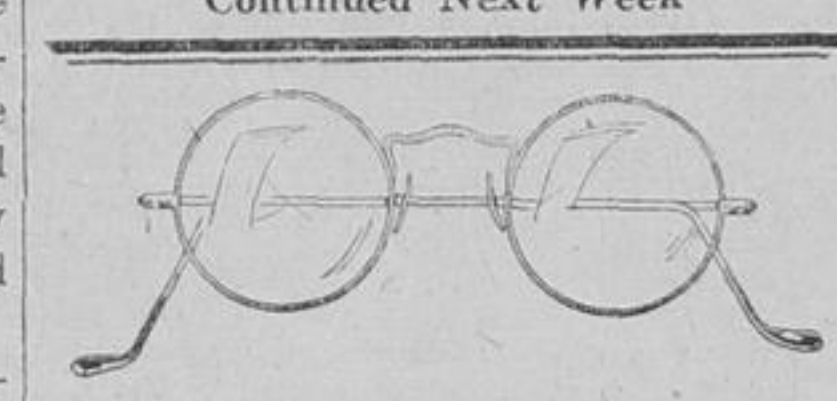


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