WILD BILL’S SABLE PARD.

BY WM. WEST WILDER—Wyoming Will.”

FOR A MOMENT WILD BILL PAUSED TO LOOK BACK, HIS SABLE PARD STILL HELD ON ONE SHOULDER.
Wild Bill's Sable Pard.

She did not see the look of admiration in the eyes of her dark-skinned companion. "I know you are afraid of nothing," the negro said; "but we cannot be safer in this matter. We cannot win success by being too bold, for our game will take the alarm and flee. We must come near and take them by surprise."

"You are right, Joe—you are always right. I trust everything to you, and I be sure you shall be well rewarded."

He made a graceful gesture of protest, and curtsied as if the debt I owe you, You proved my friend when I was charg- ed with crime. This favor I cannot now repay you. You championed my cause and inter- ested your father. With his money he brought me back to the world, and at least I can say my debts are clear."

"You are quite correct, and I shall do a dozen times."

"You may think so, but it seems to me I never can pay it. And now that Mister Vernon is dead..."

She stopped him with a gesture.

"Don't speak of that now, Joe," she entreated. "I do not wish to become aroused at present. All I desire is to find the distantly murdered and the betrayer of my sister! Joe!"

"Yes, miss;"

"I want you to go down there and investigate. Make such inquiries as you may think best, take care to be prudent."

"I will do my best."

"And you will stay here."

"But night is coming on. Surely you want the tent erected, and—"

"There will be a moon. We can put the tent up by the light of it."

"I am sorry I am not more patient to know if we are near the end of the black girl's trail?"

"But I shall have to leave you alone; you may be in danger."

"While I have this handy, and she swiftly produced a revolver. "Do not fear for me, Joe. I am not weak, you know."

With reluctance, the negro finally consented to leave her there, and she watched him go swinging down the trail, toward the Peaceful Pocket. The door of the "Dove's Nest" was standing wide open. Joe, Jackson, Stevenson, Steve and others were looking outside, while at the bar Pacific Dick was just "surrounding" the room. Joe was running the seventh drink, at the same time explaining how he had fooled Horez Zeke into looking the other way, and then had scientifically blown off the roof of the whole of his head at short range.

Suddenly there was a commotion at the door. Joe, the negro, had appeared.

"I've seen a black-eyed Sue!..."

"What am that?"

Ivy Jack Jackson gave a whoop and leaped to his feet.

"A nigger, by thunder! he howled, showing all his teeth. This seems to be the first time I saw a nigger in the country."

His shout brought the others to their feet, and Pacific Dick ran to his door to get outside and take a hand in the row he fancied had been started.

"Who said a nigger!" Joe answered, as he appeared, a huge revolver in either hand. "I ain't keen on galooshing around."

He glared around inquiringly.

"Who says I'm a nigger?" Joe again demanded.

"Pint hier critter out, an' I'll blow a hole in him big enough ter swing a cut through him."

Then his eyes fell on Black Joe and he uttered an explanation of astonishment.

"Blow me blind!"

"That's your say, sus-say?" nodded stuttering Steve.

Ivy Jack Jackson walked around the darkly, surveying him from head to feet and grinning after a horrible manner all the while. "Nigger's got a single, Chinamen," observed Crook-eyed Clark.

"Pap-paw, pap-paw!" said the mob, as most of the pocket-don't want none of her hub bim-bob-bucks in it," asserted the stammerer.

"Wa-wa," said the trap-door都没有agreed Ivy Jack Jackson.

"Tafford I nomonentse myself ter once instanter as a kangaroo of ter eternally knock them stuffing out of my head from the innumerable of Hab, Jest stuf aff an' watch me volver him. It will be a sight for maktikshun gods weep."

Then Jack raised his sleeves and spat on his mouth, and set his teeth in that ferocious grin.

"Hold on gentlemen," appealed the negro, "I did not come here to fight. I am a peaceable man."

"Haw!" scowled Pacific Dick. "He calls himself a man!"

The ruffianly crew roared with laughter, as if they thought such a thing a wonderful joke.

Ivy Jaw Jackson wasted little time. He succeeded in seizing the negro Joe, who had not prepared in the least for a fight.

"Keep off, sir!" Joe sternly warned. "I do not want to hurt you."

"Hurt me! Hush!"

Ivy Jackson was only armed with a dash, intending to clutch and throw the negro immediately.

He made a big movement, suddenly found himself caught by the collar and writhed around as if he were a toy in some show. In a moment Jackson's breeches that had received the most wear, an' the wouldn't have anything to do with his losing his hands and knees.

This was reported so swiftly that it literally seemed like a marvel to the disconcerted billy's companions. They had fully expected that Jack would crush the darkey with ease, but he had met with a most humiliating downfall, instead.

"Well?" roared Pacific Dick. "That black dog's a fighter! Down with him, parson!"

Then the entire gang sprang at the unlucky object of their anger.

Joe did not quail in the least. His dark face locked stern and his eyes flashed as he met the onslaught. Straight out from the shoulder he struck, and his hard fists knocked over man after man around him. It was a sight to see. He used no more deadly weapons than he used, he would have whipped them all.

The negro, who had been knocked down in succession at the head of Joe, holding the black girl's trail, with savages snarling the mob flung themselves upon him.

"Will he kill him! don't kill him?" yelled Pacific Dick. "Let's give him a necktie!"

In desperation, the negro Joe pulled out a revolver, and trotted away at top speed in the direction of the Peaceful Pocket. He was a man and a girl, and at least as much a woman as he was, and they were left to back the hands behind their back.

The negro now sat astride the cap- tive's body, he demanded:

"What is that thing of this year court?"

"What will become of her?"

"I'm sorry for her," said the man, spitting out a mouthful of blood and a couple of teeth, "I denounce this yer black-skinned cus ter be hung by your neck till he gets so scarce of breathin' he don't require to any great extent, boys, that's yer tree over than what we do our suspender. Come on."

A yell went up from the ragged fellows, and the running cart of the capture. Then Black Joe was jerked to his feet and headed toward the mountain, where he had deserted the western mountains and the shadows of night were gathering. It was obvious that his darkness was settling over the Peaceful Pocket.

The brave negro fully mercifully and he knew he might be dead within fifteen minutes. In truth, it did not seem possible what he was about to see the next time he put a leg on the rambler flung over a limb.

"One minute ter blubber," said Pacific Dick. "If you want ter do any prayin', tork lively."

The doomed man remained silent, gazing sternly on his feet. He knew it was now time to appeal to them for mercy. There was no mercy in their black hearts.

"Times up! Swing him!"

As the order was about to be obeyed, there ran a cluster of the darkeys, and a horseman, mounted on a coal-black stallion, dashed from behind the woods, and shot one of the right and left. Beneath the gallowtree the horse was flung suddenly on its launch, and the horseman leaped over the horses in the hands of the rider.

These horses were mounted on the startled stallion, and the horseman cried in a clear, ringing voice:

"Blow me blind! It's Wild Bill!"

The name was known from one end of the
Wild Bill’s Sable Pard.

Pacific Dick growled.

"Bill, I know you, Bill, we won’t keep you out of this fight. I’m ashamed to have you for a friend of mine.

"But which end by being your funeral without any feeling, Pacific Dick,” came calmly from the little fellow, “I know you and I know what you are, Dick, and that is the worst insult of all to Pacific Dick. You slipped out of this country at Haynes City toward me, but I had no call to run you down. All the same, you are wanted there, and I don’t want the sheriff to have you, I’d give you money and thanks if I tood you back.

"I never killed a man.

"Then I might carry your head.

"I ain’t wantin’ no row with you—"

The bully of Pacific Pockett slunk back and glared at the新建的 nemesis, turned one of the receivers on the floor full on the man.

Dick hesitated.

"Git or I’ll blow your head off!"

"This isn’t no fair shake!

"Well, it’s business, boy."

"Are you goin’ ter set yerself up ag’in all Pacific Pockett?"

"It don’t make any difference what I am goin’ to do. I am in no mood to palaver. Directly I shall begin to shoot and then do the dancin’ afterward."

Dick saw he was inviting death by remaining there, and started for the door. At this moment a clatter of hoofs was heard outside, and out of the dust came another horse and rider. Straight into the throng dashed the horse, and cries of surprise came from the men when they eyes rested on the rider.

"A ga’l!"

"Wa-ll, I’m derined!"

"A shannel!"

"And I’m a lassie, too!"

It was Lea, the mistress of the imperiled negro. With a roar of laughter, she instantly threw off the noose and freed his hands with one sweep of a keen knife.

"For shame, girl,” she cried, in a clear and musical voice, "what has he ever done that you should treat him in this way?"

There was no reply.

"It is one of their little jokes,” Wild Bill explained, in his burly manner. "This is the way the gentle citizens of Pacific Pockett provide themselves with amusement, miss. If they do not have a funeral at least as often as every other day, they think the town is going to seed. However, I think they will condescend to forego their pleasure on this occasion."

"Seems as how there’s a ga’l in it, I s’pose they’ll hang her, too,” mumbled Ivory Jackson, grinning in a sulky fashion. "It’s ba’ny day every Pacific Pockett’s day. We don’t see no colour of foreginer or young femninising genderties, but we know how ter treat them liars, and the cussier the better, and the worse the better.

"All their same,” cried one from the outskirts of the crowd, "we’d advise them nigger to’ set the fire in a draft in a little while and let it burn this vicinity."

The Pacific Pockett’s eyes were turned toward the spot where the speaker stood, and he sternly called:

"If you have any advice to give my friend, step up and give it to a man—don’t mess up like a kind of sonetist for him."

But the fellow had no idea of facing Wild Bill, so he kept quiet.

Seeing the speaker did not intend to come forward, Bill said:

"The entertainment’s all over, cards. That won’t be any more fun here till the next time. Now just you people go over to the saloon and take a drink all round. Tell the barkeeper I will be over in a short time and settle the bill."

This had the desired effect, the greater portion of the mob uttering loud whoops as they rushed pell mell for the saloon. The others, uttering beneath their breaths, moved away more slowly, but not one refused to go.

When they left, Wild Bill laughed softly.

"They had to do it,” he said, "but they were forced into it. That is a bad mob, and no mistake, Pard,” speaking to the negro, "you were right about him."

"I do, sir,” said Joe: "and I know I have you to thank. But for your appearance, I should be hanging from this limb. You have saved my life, Pard, and I never will fail my word when the time may come—"

"There, Joe,” said Bill, rather brusquely, "it is all right and I do not expect anything in return. The moment I sights that gang, I thought they were up to deviltry, and so I took the matter in hand."

"And yet I should have been too late but for you,” said Lea. "You must let us thank you, Mr. Bill."

She held out her hand, and Wild Bill lightly clasped the slender glove fingers.

CHAPTER XI.

TWO-HEADED WOLF.

An hour later three persons were sitting beside a little fire that was putting up a good enough show to keep the three occupants of a tent that was pitched in a snug little nook about a mile from Peaceful Pockett. The three were the two men, John Bannerman, and the woman.

The Pistol King had accompanied the girl and the negro to the little nook where his horse had been left, and, when the cozy nook was found, he sided Joe in putting up the tent. All was done, and now three sat down near the fire the darkly lighted.

"It is rather strange to find a charming young lady travellers’ through this ungloomy country like this,” observed Wild Bill, gazing in an appreciation manner at Lea.

"Indeed, had I not been informed you were somewhere in these parts, I should have been completely astonished at your appearance on the scene down there."

He fancied there was much of sadness in that smile.

"We are—or rather duty—brings me to these parts."

Bill was not a man to inquire into other people’s affairs if they were not of necessity to be reserved, so he asked no question, although he noticed Joe’s look.

"This is a dangerous section for a young girl to sojourn in, and I would warn you to be well guarded. It must be an imperative duty that brings you here."

She locked Bill full in the face, and then she went on, with deliberation.

"I have no trust in you, and I am going to tell you my story. It is something I do not often tell, for it is a most bitter thing, but I only tell it to the soul, but something urges me to confide in you."

"If you see fit to do so, miss,” returned the Pistol King, "I can appreciate it, and I shall consider you have done me an honor, and I do not think you may have the need to fear my trust. At the same time, if you do not wish to speak of the matter, by all means remain silent."

"Something urges me to speak. You are a man who knows this world and its people. Possibly you can aid me."

"If I can do so, I am yours to command at all times."

"I will not make the story a long one, for it is a very bitter thing. It is a tale that has been, or had, a twin sister who was my very image with the exception that she was a blonde. Her name was Lelia. She loved me, and as some women are jealous of their equal, my sister was jealous of her."

"Rather was it otherwise, but at heart a kind one. He honored right and hated wrong. For wickedness he had but little compassion, for he was moderately virtuous, but he gave both Lea and myself good educations. Lea was musical; I am not. You see, then, she begat, fa- ther sent her abroad to finish her musical educ-

"It was in Paris. Lea met a young American—"

An artist. She wrote of him, but from her letters I did not dream anything more than a passing friendship had been formed. Still something made me uneasy. There was too much about Justin Douglas in her letters, and not enough about herself and her progress.

"I have no wish to write any more about this young lady. This young lady has just published her studies, yet she was coming home. It was strange.

"She came. She had not changed much—she was rather more cold. She did not explain her sudden move at first, and we gave her time to recover.

"The explanation came in the form of Justin Douglas. The young artist had been forced to resign his professorship, but he had not remained with the ocean between them. She loved him; he needed to love her. I was the first to hear her secret.

"For some reason, a feeling that seemed to follow her indispensable, the spell of the night, like, I burst into tears. Lea held me in her arms, and the tears fell in a storm."

"But I cannot help thinking of her, how many, how noble he was. She feared father’s sternness; I had always seemed father’s
favorite, and she wished me to tell him. I did so.

As I had anticipated, father was not pleased. Still, I think I did my duty. I told him about Justin Douglass came, and I must confess I was favorably impressed with him. I think father was also, as he said nothing.

The following day after his visit to our home, I met him in the streets. He looked different. It was late, we had been to a dance the night before. One of the caps-tivity birds had waltzed off with one of the girls, and the one who had escaped was Morris Douglass.

It came to pass that Morris Douglass was the brother of my sister's lover. You can imagine what thoughts I had now. I had said my father was not pleased, but I have no doubt that Justin Douglass again. Poor Lois! Her heart was nearly broken, and I could not comfort her.

For nearly six months I am sure my sister and I knew nothing of this. But my father gave him up, even then his brother was wanted for robbery and murder. Some time on a hillside meeting, a fact which I discovered. I warned Lois, but when that died down, I told her to come here again. He came here, and I could not forgive him for that. He struck Justin Douglass. My sister's lover was killed, and we knew my father would regret it.

Father feared he would try to abduct Lois, which was a real fear, because of the man's racket, so he kept her under guard, as it were. But in the end the man was caught and sent to jail. He was sentenced to twenty years on the space. In the library.

"What is there been murdered?"

Lea had suddenly arisen to her feet, and she declared it in the sentiments of a dramatic effect that I was to see the man his friend. (For the man was a friend of my father's.

"All I can say is that it was her last wish."

I was not her, but I was a friend of the man. Of course, I knew nothing of the man's fearfulness, and I did not know what to do. I was a friend of the man.

"Just as Douglass committed the murder?" asked Wild Bill, who was a spellbound listener.

"That was the case," I answered. "Jo Ann was found murdered."

The knife with which the deed was done was found in his pocket. It was a common clasp-knife, and I have heard it said that it was used for various purposes.

"Of course, I have heard that it was used for various purposes."

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made no protest. Without a word, he rode the animal round to the lean-to, and the crowd drifted back to the salon, their delight written on their faces.

"It’s a gorgeous, sure-stuff tenderfoot!" boasted the whisperied Pacific Dick. "We’ll hev a row!"

Wild Bill’s Sable Pard.

Joe said nothing just then, for he was breathing heavily from his magnificent exertions. The stake was lost, but wild "Bill" declared the leader of the masks. The two men grunted. "For me," he cried. "Well, you'll have to take your chance." "That I can do," I replied, "I am Captain Shadow, chief of the Trail Pirates." Joe turned to me and said, "You know I had an account with you;" "Just the same, I have one with you;" "And you figger on raking me in?" "I do;" "You never made a bigger mistake in all your life, pard. You will observe I have the drop on you;" "And I have all three men to back me up," with a motion of the hand that inclined the entire body, "Hail! Then all Peaceful Pocket is in sympathy with the Trail Pirates." "They dare not disobey Captain Shadow;" "Boo! They don't want to do so. But you made a mighty big mistake, Captain Shadow, when you thought to take wild Bill in such a manner." Then, almost like lightning, the pistol King fired both a dozen shots. There was a jingling crash of glass and darkness followed, telling the man had shot out the lights. The pistol King dropped from the throats of the mob, and there was a rush for the spot where Bill and his negro companion had stood against the wall. They were not there! Then the crowd did not make this discovery at once, and a general brawl followed in the darkness. More than a dozen men thinking there was a man and a game. The instant he shot out the lights, Bill had grabbed the negro and hurried him toward the bar, which was directly away from where he was. The mob could not see him. They thought the mob would think he would try to make his escape by the window nearest, and so he had not approached it as fast as a man. Not a few of them within the saloon were non-combatants, and they fought their way to the door. Suddenly the light of a dark lantern with a strong reflector flashed on. It was in the hands of Captain Shadow, and he turned the light on the seething knot of men, shouting: "Steady, steady! This will show Bill’s position to you. But it was not destined to do so. In the darkness at one side of the light a spout of fire shot outward and upward. A bullet from a heavy revolver struck and destroyed the lamp. Captain Shadow quickly answered the shot, but he was shot with, and, Black Joe at his side, he escaped from the saloon. He did not linger, but hurried immediately toward the shadows. He was further out of the extent of the town the two men bailed and listened to the bowling that came from the vicinity of the Dove’s Nest. Bill did not rush. "Well, I have heard a great deal about this place," the stranger said, and I must confess it fully meets my expectations. It is a hot town in every sense of the word, and is an excellent place for criminals to take refuge." "Yes," agreed Joe. "And that is why we are here;" "Yes, it, it. I have followed a man here from Kansas, and I fancy the man was in that saloon to-night;" "It is so, sir?" "Yes; the honest man was Captain Shadow. Had I been sure, I would have shot him—No, no; I will take him back to Kansas, as I promised." "I beg your pardon, sir," put in Black Joe; "I have been here myself, that man. Bill started and turned toward the negro. "Who are you?" "I am wild Bill, who are you?" "My name is Roamin’ Rockwell, and—" "The negro gave an exclamation of astonishment. "Mister Rockwell, is it really you?" "Yes; who knows me?" "Joe Armstrong," "A cry of satisfaction breaks from the man’s lips." "Then I have overtaken you at last! But where is Miss Lea?" "She is not far away;" "I beg of you, sir, to find me at all," the man declared. "They told me you had come toward this town, I followed and arrived here a short time since. I went to a hotel back there, but a mob of men set on me, and I was stumped by a bullet, and there was a man who came to my assistance." "I reckon I was that man," affirmed Wild Bill. The young tenderfoot was delighted at this discovery, and he thanked the Pistol King again and again. "I do not know what I should have done if you had not appeared and did, as you did."

"Judge," Joe added, "I was determined not to be bullied into drinking that liquor."

"Which was quite right, though not so签约仪式 discretely. I like a man who won’t be driven. But how did you get here?"

"I scarcely know. When I was conscious again, the saloon was filled with shouting, bowing mob. I scrambled up and made a rush with some others. The next I knew I was outside. Then some truth recognized me, and I had to knock over one fellow and take to my heels. Luck brought me here;" "Where is your young man?" "Back at the lean-to."

"No, where you remain here with Joe, while I go for the animal. You must not think of going to that place again to-night. It is not for you to do. Your corporal is perfectly safe in Peaceful Pocket. He is apt to wake up in the morning and think he is at home."

"I was warned, but I did not believe the place so very bad;"

"Yes, it is a very tough town."

Bill left the young tenderfoot and the negro together, while he hurried to the lean-to, hoping he would be in time to secure the horse before some thief got away with the animal. He was fortunate to find the horse still in the lean-to. The lights had been restored within the saloon, and Bill paused to peer in at a window. There was an excited mob around the bar, but the three masked henchmen had disappeared. Pacific Dick had mounted on the bar and was barring the crowd. Bill smiled grimly, as he listened to the boisterous dialogue. Like a shadow, a figure appeared at the Pistol King’s side. Bill had not heard the least sound, but he felt a light touch on the arm. As swift as a flash, he wheeled, a revolver in hand. "You won’t need her use it," said a low, rapping voice. "I’m a harbinger of the decree;"

"In a round bear-headed, white-bearded man of solid build. There was a prominent ‘hump’ on the stranger’s back, and his hat was pulled well over his eyes. He leaned on a heavy bowled staff, and his boots were rather ragged."

"Will you let me have peace?" Bill demanded. "Oh, I’m only Old Hunch, I’m a peace officer, and I’m here in the interest of Peaceful Pocket say’s, ‘You have no business to be here at all, you’;"

"Ha! ha!" winked the old fellow. "That’s so—that’s so! You’re a keen one, you are! Who be you?"

"I’m a man from Kansas;"

"I’m back again? What for? why’d you come? There he bin raisin’ a fearful row. I heard them shooting’s, so I kept away. There Pacific Dick told me;"

"Then you know the people of Peaceful Pocket say’s, "Well, I reckon;"

"How long have you been in these parts?"

"That might mean a week or ten years. What does it mean?"

"Neither."

"Then what does it mean?"

"Go on, you goin’ to hurt yet? What’s the matter with you? Instead of answering the question, the stranger took an anointed bullet from his pocket, tumbled it into his mouth, and spat it out."

"Who are you?"

"I am wild Bill, who are you?"

"My name is Roamin’ Rockwell, and—" "The negro gave an exclamation of astonishment. "Mister Rockwell, is it really you?" "Yes, who knows me?"

"Joe Armstrong," "A cry of satisfaction breaks from the man’s lips."

"Then I have overtaken you at last! But where is Miss Lea?"

"She is not far away;"

"I beg of you, sir, to find me at all," the man declared. "They told me you had come toward this town, I followed and arrived here a short time since. I went to a hotel back there, but a mob of men set on me, and I was stumped by a bullet, and there was a man who came to my assistance."

"I reckon I was that man," affirmed Wild Bill. The young tenderfoot was delighted at this discovery, and he thanked the Pistol King again and again. "I do not know what I should have done if you had not appeared and did, as you did."

"Judge," Joe added, "I was determined not to be bullied into drinking that liquor."

"Which was quite right, though not so签约仪式 discretely. I like a man who won’t be driven. But how did you get here?"

"I scarcely know. When I was conscious again, the saloon was filled with shouting, bowing mob. I scrambled up and made a rush with some others. The next I knew I was outside. Then some truth recognized me, and I
Wild Bill's Sable Pard.

Len listened to the words of his faithful black friend with a feeling of excitement when he saw that the young people were left alone, and Robin was given plenty of chance to explain in his own words what had happened that evening.

"Who is he?" asked Bill of Joe. "No, no, no! Nobody makes me out! I don't mean you, Joe, do I?" He looked at the man with increasing interest.

"That settles it!" exclaimed Bill. "Captain Shadow is my man!" he asked. "Yes, my man, and yours too, Bill," he replied. "Well, the Trail Pirates are apt to lose their chief before the morning," he said. "Good! I do not love him. I have said enough, now I will go. Look out for your heart out."

With that warning, the old man easily scrambled over the fence and disappeared.

VIII.

Barry had the gray-bearded hunchback discovered when Les Vernon darted from behind a huge bowlder and hastened to Wild Bill's side.

"Who is he?" asked Bill. "The Pistol King was astounded. "Why?" he asked. "He is the murderer of my father!" he said. "Yes!" he replied.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed. "I am in disguise, but I recognize him. I would have shot him dead, but I thought there was a chance of my pock-marked face giving me away. I will kill him, if I have to," he said. "She might perhaps where he has left her. I want you to follow him and discover where she is. If you can't find her, you will get away while we are talking!"

"My horse was stolen, you guard a greater part of the time, Black Joe relieving him toward morning. For all of his right, the Pistol King seemed ill at ease in the morning. The last of the dried beef and hard-tack served him for breakfast, and then the horses were attended to.

When this was done, Bill added his own horse and was again going down into the Pocket to purchase provisions. He said he wanted to make a descent, so he would not enter the town from the side nearest the camp. The stranger man did not hesitate about entering the lawless town. He rode in boldly as if every man of the place was his particular friend, and he was not molested.

He knew he was feared by the ruffians of the border, and his very presence showed them how utterly indifferent he was to their hatred. It was now time to keep them in awe of him than anything else.

At the general store of the town he purchased such things as he believed would come of the necessary horse without taking up the door of the store. Of course he was keenly on the alert, but he never seemed more audacious and at ease to the eyes of any man.

Out of the town rode the Pistol King, and not a hand was lifted to check him. Beyond sight of any man, and in the thick of the little camp. He had almost reached it, when suddenly a man stepped out into his path.
The revolver that swung to Bill's hand was thrust back into its holster when he discovered the man was Old Hunch. The white-bearded old fellow held up one hand.

"Hold on, he said. "I want to see a summary of your affairs."

The rider drew up the horse. "All right, say on," he said.

"You're known as Wild Bill!"

"Yes, you are not a man to be trifled with!"

"Last night, down in that town, a band of men swore to have your heart!

"Yes, you are a man of the west!"

"Where were you?"

"Layin' close to a cabin wall; they was in the act of entering it. That's the way I knew it was a foot, but he's ain't'" he added.

Bill looked at the man with increasing interest. "I don't exactly make you out," he confessed.

"No, no, no! Nobody makes me out! I don't mean you, Joe, do I?"

"Who were the men who swore to have your heart?"

"The bad men of Peaceful Pocket. I know them—" I know them all, they have their faces covered with marks, but I know 'em!"

"Masked, eh? Then they were Captain Shadow and his band!"

Old Hunch nodded. "Yes, you are. He said be would give five hundred dollars to the man who out your heart out.

"That settles it!" exclaimed Bill. "Captain Shadow is my man!

Barry had the gray-bearded hunchback discovered when Les Vernon darted from behind a huge bowlder and hastened to Wild Bill's side. "That man," he said. "For Heaven's sake, follow him!"

"Pistol King was astounded. "Why?" he asked. "He is the murderer of my father!" he said. "Yes!" he replied. "Impossible!" he exclaimed. "I am in disguise, but I recognize him. I would have shot him dead, but I thought there was a chance of my pock-marked face giving me away. I will kill him, if I have to," he said. "She might perhaps where he has left her. I want you to follow him and discover where she is. If you can't find her, you will get away while we are talking!"

"My horse was stolen, you guard a greater part of the time, Black Joe relieving him toward morning. For all of his right, the Pistol King seemed ill at ease in the morning. The last of the dried beef and hard-tack served him for breakfast, and then the horses were attended to.

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Bill looked at the man with increasing interest. "I don't exactly make you out," he confessed.

"No, no, no! Nobody makes me out! I don't mean you, Joe, do I?"

"Who were the men who swore to have your heart?"

"The bad men of Peaceful Pocket. I know them—" I know them all, they have their faces covered with marks, but I know 'em!"

"Masked, eh? Then they were Captain Shadow and his band!"

Old Hunch nodded. "Yes, you are. He said be would give five hundred dollars to the man who out your heart out.

"That settles it!" exclaimed Bill. "Captain Shadow is my man!"
against me—at least, they seem to think so. Cole was drunk—it was his life or mine. I was given orders to kill him, and the thought of doing it paralyzed me, as though I was terrorizing the town. As it was, he fired one shot at me. I returned it, and my bullet found his brain.

"But, bah! What is the use of telling this to you? I make mistakes. You see why my life was in peril. I shot Full Cole, and for that I had to pay the penalty.

"I am not here to argue this."

"There is no argument. You think you have recovered?"

"Captain Shadow started.

"Well, he said, after a time, "it makes no difference if you do know. You will be dead within ten minutes!"

"And Justin says he will stain his hands with a crime once more.""

The coffee-faces were fairly staggered as if struck.

"Justin Douglas!" he gasped. "Gods!"

"So that struck home!" broke from Wild Bill's lips. "I thought it would. Yes, I know you are Justin Douglas."

"I am not—" I swear."

The outlaw suddenly checked himself.

"What is the use?" he cried. "I will not waste time in explaining. Let me see that you are secure."

He examined Wild Bill's bonds, saying when he had finished:

"A Hercules could not break them, I am not going to weaken the lock by striking at them but I am going off to deal with a dancer. There is one near me who nearly can out a bullet through your heart."

He drew a revolver, and, in a few minutes, he was commanded.

The three men walked from the old Wild Bill, who seemed as if he was the most uncomfortable of the three, but as he was not able to move or sit, it meant that they had saved him still, though looking into the ghastly face of death, the man did not qualm.

The girl seemed about as far as he least could best, and then he turned, cocking his revolver, and then stood as he was when he rode.

The next moment a cry of wonder broke from his lips.

"I was left a desert—Wild Bill had vanished.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PISTOL KING'S NERVE.

GONE!

Away Captain Shadow was amazed would but poorly express his feelings.

He was stunned.

His trusted companions were so astonished they could only stare at the place where his captive had been a few moments before.

As soon as the chief could catch his breath, he burst into a torrent of exclamations. He first cursed his crooks, then his two comrades, then, and all of a sudden, he hastened to conceal himself from the gaze of the three men.

The leader of the Trail Pirates did not think of approaching the spot where the Pistol King had been, for the sudden fall was a complete surprise to them. He took good care to keep away. With his two followers, he retired in a corner of the graveyard, with a suddenness that told how much he feared Wild Bill.

There was nothing marvelous in Bill's escape. Barely had he started on the trail of Old Bunch when the negro, Strong Arm, Joe, came upon Lea with the black horse. With a few words, the girl explained everything, and Joe immediately expressed a desire to follow Bill.

"I may get into trouble, or something of the sort," the faithful Joe replied, "if I am not, I shall be able to help him."

Lea made Joe promise not to let Bill know he was following, unless the frontiersman should fall into some trouble or need his assistance. Then Bill was sent, and the two friends took the trail of the man who had rescued him from lynching at the hands of the townspeople of Peaceful Pocket.

"And you," Joe said.

Joe did not have to bear near enough to aid the Pistol King when the two rode past, but he soon discovered what had happened.

Three black horses near to the which the captive was bound in a standing posture enabled the two friends soon to find the place, and Bill was out of the spot without being detected. Thus he was able to hear some of the conversation that passed between Captain Shadow and the outlaw.

If it had been necessary to do so in order to save Bill's life, Strong Arm Joe turned to the Trail Pirates; but he was not rash. He waited for his time to come, and when time arrived, his friend came out of the grave to save Bill from the grave, the man who directed the chief to shoot the prisoner.
CHAPTER X.
TWO AGAINST THE TOWN.
WILD BILL did not hesitate about entering the saloon, which had been soberly wiped out without doing the saloon, to draw his ready revolvers and keep strong.

Strong Arm Joe also drew a revolver and followed.

They entered the saloon, and found a crowd of the worst men of the Pocket there. Pacific Dick was at the bar.

The appearance of Bill and his Sable Parry was noticed, or course, but not one of the ruffians could steer clear of them. The Pistol King had expected trouble the moment he showed up in the Pocket, and he was somewhat surprised when not a man seemed to observe him.

However, Wild Bill was not a man to betray suspicion, and he made straight for Pacific Dick, whom he had single out. Dick's back was turned, and he did not turn. The Parbs heard him say:

"You don't go in a fresh supply of pison, Seat! You've been working this stuff over till it's bad shape. This stuff manufacturers of your own buy-juice is played out, and we respectable an' peaceful citizens of this gentle town are called on to demand 'satisfaction.'"

"Is where you are mighty apt to go at!" said a stern voice, and Wild Bill's hand fell on the bully's shoulder.

Dick uttered an explanation and reached for his weapon, but the cold mallet of a revolver was thrust against his temple.

"Hands off!"

Before he could see Wild Bill's gleaming eyes, and then he obeyed quickly enough.

The mob of spectators, sharply watching for any preconcerted move on their part, but they all the appearance of men too much surprised to act.

"What's the matter now?" saluted the sentinel.

"As if you do not know?"

"Well, I'm mad again, I do!"

The teeth of the bully grated a little, and there was nothing but love in the look he shot the Pistol King.

"You have a great way of making that kind of talk when you hold your der, he scowled.

"It is well to have the drop when surrounded by ruffians, but I can now see such a big, bad Dick, as you ought to know by this time."

"The girl!"

"Yes, and the tenderfoot."

"What tenderfoot—what gal?"

"You know what girl and what tenderfoot."

This was not one to play fast and loose!

"Wash, that ain't him but one gal and an' other tenderfoot in this yere town of late."

"And? you mean them?"

"Yes, Wash, I don't know a blamed thing about them."

"All the same, if you have any great desire to come livin', you'll take me to the place where they are."

"Don't know anythin' bout 'em,

Dick sullenly insisted. "Wash, I have no desire to come with you a bit, but I know my own stuff, and I don't have no dandy's I go chasing after pittisans."

"You know as well as I what has happened to the girl and the tenderfoot, and, as you are the leader in this little demonstration in this part, I have come to you. I mean business, and I am not going to fool you with you all day. I can bet your sweet life!"

Bill was holding himself well in hand, but an outbreak was inevitable. For at any rate, there might be cold meat in Pacific Pocket.

Black Joe said not a word, but his eyes were restlessly roving from face to face of those who were watching the controversy between the bully of the camp and the Pistol King. He almost expected some one would try a snap shot at Bill, and he meant to prevent such a thing, if possible.

The crowd was silent, breathlessly regarding the two men near the bar. Everybody seemed to feel that bloodshed was imminent.

Nobody uttered a word. They knew they would be anything but "healthy."

"That will not wash, Pacific Dick," came sternly from Wild Bill's lips. "You ought to know better than to try it on me."

"It's your show, I guess.

"It's crooked!"

"No, not crooked."

"But I say it is! I have you under my gun—"

The money was at last in the open, and they all knew the deadly work that would follow should the Dick begin to pull.

Pacific Dick scrambled to his feet.

"It's all right, pard," he hurried, triumphantly, "I'll back the man's right, you turn out that next minute."

"I'll take my chances."

"They're both no other than you're drunk now.

"I'm here for biz or blood. You ought to know what that means. If you do not, so much the worse for you, but I will have the truth of it. I will give Pacific Pocket another subject for its cemetery."

Dick resolved to appeal to the crowd.

"Pard—"

"That's That, Dick it!"

The Pistol King's words silenced him before he was fairly started. Bill was at his side, and he did not turn. The Parbs heard him say:

"You will do your talkin' to me, Bill declared.

You will have plenty of time to talk with them later—if you talk straight with me. If not—Come, come! I have wasted too much time with you to-day. It is not my way to chin like this."

A desperate look settled in Pacific Dick's eyes. What should he do? He could not back down and "squawk" for the very eyes of the men over whom he had lorded it so long, and to whom he had a hundred times declared he did not fear Wild Bill or any other man alive.

His heart was as lead. He would talk for time; something might turn up.

"Bill—"

"Well?"

"You won't believe I tell truth."

"Is that the conclusion you have always drawn, as an amazing liar."

"Well, I ain't the use of my tellin' ye anythin', then?"

"There is no use of your telling anything but the truth."

"You won't believe I tell you the truth?

"Well, try it."

"What has happened fer ther gal an' ther tenderfoot."

Wild Bill scowled.

"I am asking you questions, remember that?"

"If, but I damn what's happened, how I goin' ter tell anythin'?"

"Look here, Dick. you see through your little game. Your mouth. It won't work. If you don't come to the point, you'll know cold! That business straight!"

What was to be done? Dick asked himself the question, and coldly dared to reply. He saw a deadly glitter in the eyes of the man with the revolver, and knew he could not fool with him. He opened his mouth to speak, but he did not give a word.

At this instant Dick was forced to play fast and too.

"That's Len's voice!" shouted Black Joe, exulting.

"Help! help!"

Again the cry rang up.

Then there were shouts in masculine tones, followed by sounds of a desperate struggle.

For a brief time, all within the saloon seemed spellbound with astonishment. 

Then came the sound of a lock being struck.

The next instant the door was burst open and a man staggered into the saloon, blood running down his face. It was Crook-nosed Clara.

"I'm shot," she gasped. "That devil broke free in some way and got the revolver away from me, I flammed him down, but he made a dash for the door."

The negro plunged through the open doorway, but Dick turned and covered the nub.

The fight was just recovering from its amazement, and in another moment they would have rushed for the room.

"Like the blast of a trap, the Pistol King's voice rang through the saloon:

"Stop!"

That checked the rush.

The first man to advance died in his tracks.

I have you covered!"

A score of hands were on the butts of revolvers, but for some reason, not a weapon was drawn. It seemed to every man as if Bill's eyes were fixed on him, and they all knew the deadly work that would follow should the Dick begin to pull.

Pacific Dick scrambled to his feet.

"It's all right, pard," he hurried, triumphantly, "I'll back the man's right, you turn out that next minute."

"'Em all like rats in a trap!"

The noise that was half a cheer ran over the crowd.

"We've got ya trapped, Wild Bill," laughed the bully of the Pocket.

"Don't be so sure of that," was the cool retort, "I still have my gun, and my parb is at my back."

"But what'll you two 'mount ter gittin' ther hole in?"

"Well, we will show you before we are done. You can't find us two extremely hard men down to."

"But down you go, just the same. This is what we was countin' on—gittin' you into a trap like this."

"I fail to see the trap."

"Yaa, you're in it. Ther's no way of gittin' out of that room that isn't kept through this yere saloon."

"Then we'll go out through this saloon!"

"You lie, Bill, you can't! You do!"

Of a sudden, Bill heard heavy bowels behind him. A scout roared from the Pocket also heard the sounds, and they looked into each other's faces in surprise.

What was the meaning of it?

"That tot-tot-tenderfoot's tryin' ter break down doors and it's broke through yer door, Stevo."

"That's so!" cried Pacific Dick. "Some of you cowards git outside an' stop him when he breaks through."

The first man who tries to leave this room leaves bullets declared Wild Bill.

CHAPTER XI.
A RUN FOR LIFE.
And he meant what he said.

The mob knew it.

Pacific Dick ground out an impassive, and sought to draw a revolver.

Quick as a flash, one of Wild Bill's revolvers covered him, and the Pistol King said:

"Hands up, Dick!"

"I'll break through the door," he said, but he saw the hammer of Bill's revolver rising before the pressure on the trigger. Another ounce would send a bullet into his brain.

Up went his hands, the crowd scattered into the walls. The blowing shook beneath them.

It was a singular spectacle—one man holding a score and a half of men in a saloon.

But that one man was Wild Bill.

The last shot was fired within the saloon but knew the particulars of his fight with the McClouds gang, in which he had, single-handed and alone, whipped ten of the most desperate and bloodthirsty border ruffians, killing eight of them in the struggle.

Little wonder the toughs of Peaceful Pocket did not care to arouse the devil in the man who
almost directly opposite that taken by Robin and Lena. "If we can reach the rocky gully down there," he said, "we ought to be able to give those fellows the slip."

They headed for the mouth of the gorge and dashed on. The pursuers evidently divided their intention, for they made still more desperate effort to overtake Bill.

The limits of the town were passed and the mouth of the gorge opened at hand. Occasional bullet would go singing past them. "We'll make it right till mid Bill," they said. "They will still pursue us."

"Not much," said Bill. "How will you stop them?"

"With bullets."

The gullies ahead and Bill crept behind a bowlder, turning his blue eyes back toward the passing noon. One of the desperadoes was far in advance of his companions.

"Cold-faced fellow will have to go under," calmly observed the Pistoleer.

The next moment Bills right-hand revolver spoke, and the man went rolling forward on his face.

The others instantly halted. They saw Wild Bill was encircled by a bowlder that would protect him from their bullets, while he could shoot them in a perfect way from behind the knoll of stones.

They held a consultation.

"Well," observed Bill, as he ejected the empty shells from his revolver and replaced them with fresh cartridges, "let us try them up with a round turn. It stopped them much more suddenly than before. I believe I would have to kill five or six before they would chain up."

The desperadoes were talking excitedly, evidently trying to agree upon some plan of action.

"What are we going to do?" asked Joe. "We cannot remain here and keep them back. They can gain the top and cut off us or run down upon us."

And that was what they are discussing, nodded Bill. "It is time for us to make our escape."

"They will see us when we go away."

"If we can't help it."

"Well, I suppose we had better help it."

"I will show you," replied Bill, after he had carefully cleaned his revolver, "you see that little gully there?"

"Yes."

"Well, we must keep this bowlder between us and the mob out there till we reach this end of the gully. Then well have to creep down it till we can reach the cover beyond."

"Can we do it?"

"We can."

"All right."

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Then go ahead. I will remain here and make it as rough for them as they try to make it for us."

Joe did not hesitate, for he knew it was the only thing to do, he so at once began to creep away, taking care to keep the bowlder between him and the bloodhounds. In this way he reached the bowlder, and, lying flat on his stomach, wiggled his way down to the bushes below.

Occasionally Wild Bill would show himself to the band of ruffians, but he kept his person concealed the most of the time. At length a low whizle came from the hill above, telling him his hard had reached their cover.

Then Bill arose and deliberately sent two bullets whistling into the knoll of men, causing them to scatter precipitately.

Having discharged his pistol, Wild Bill dropped on his hands and knees and crept away after Joe. He reached the little gully, and, pressing himself close to the ground, crawled to the bushes below. Once fairly beneath their cover, he found himself in a respect.

"We're in luck!" laughed Wild Bill. "They have not smoked our little game, and probably will think we are behind that bowlder. Now we shall have no trouble in giving them the slip."

He led the way, Wild Bill creeping as before, telling Joe what was in his mind. Joe said, they found no trouble in getting away, although they were within hearing when a chorus of savage yelling had first disclosed they were tracked.

"Let them whoop," said Bill, crudely. "They can yell till their throats are raw, for all we care. We are beyond their reach for the present, and the ruffians of Peaceful Pocket have been beared in their den. They will never get over the disgrace of it."

They circled the town, moving toward the spot where the bank had been placed. "You think you shall find Miss Lena there," said Joe.

"She blacked his head."

"It is not at all likely, Bill," said Joe. "It is my guess that the bloodhounds will get there ahead of the toughs. If they touch that animal..."

He was not finished, but the look on his face spoke as plainly as words. Blood would flow if the black steed had not been broken. As they approached the spot the ten men turned, Bill gripped his reins and shouted. "The devils may attempt to ambush us here," he explained. "We must look right sharp."

They saw not a sign of the ruffian crew, and soon they reached the spot where the horses had been left.

Haven — for they were gone! A furious exclamation of anger escaped Wild Bill.

CHAPTER XII

THE LOST IN FLOOD.

Revolvers in hand, the Pistoleer led the way. They were unusually light. His hands were too hardly to hold the evidence of his eyes. He was gripping the grips of his weapons so tightly as to make them creak. His galloping teeth, "Bolax! Well, the thieves shall pay dearly for this?"

He was on a terrible look on his face, which told he was now thoroughly aroused. The bloodhounds were baying furiously. The ruffian had made a discovery. A bit of paper was flitting from the mouth of a tree one of the empty bullet box. "See there?" cried the negro, pointing to it.

Wild Bill saw the paper and sprang forward to secure it. At a glance he saw there was writing upon it. He snatched it down, and his eyes lighted up over the scattered words. Then an exclamation of relief broke from his lips.

"It's declared."

"What's all right?"

"Everything."

"How do you make that out?"

"This was written by the tnderfoot. After the bank was closed it was a discovery,"

"The thieves were not stolen?"

"No."

"Good!"

"You may well say so. But I wonder where the tnderfoot and Miss Lena are at this moment?"

The couple were miles away, riding to the north.

An hour before they had sat in the little back room of the saloon, both bound to chairs and Robin's legs. Reclining against Rockwell's head and aware he would blow the young man's brains out if Lena were not in his help, in the bottom of the saloon they could hear Wild Bill threatening Pacific Dick with instant justice.

But Robin was not as helpless as he looked. In days gone by, he had often amused himself with the knowledge that he knew the make and model of independence. He would allow himself to be tied by any one, and the rope knotted in fifty places; then, in the concealment of a cabinet, he would release himself in less than half a minute.

It is not necessary to explain here how the trick is done, but there is a great deal in the swiveling and expansion of muscles. When the rope was knotted about Robin's wrists, he took good care to expand the muscles so his wrists were not cut. Then he had the rope knotted behind the chair, and when the rope was pulled, he quietly worked them free from the ropes.

Then, at a critical juncture, he flung himself on Crook-nosed Clark.

The attack was wholly unexpected, and Robin was in need of the revolution the from the ruffian's hand.

But the chair still hung to the young man, bound there by the ropes he had not found a chance to loosen. Clark saw this and he grasped the rope that had been taken from the floor, while Lena's cries for help rang out.

When the ruffian exploded in Robin's grasp, and the bullet ripped along Clark's cheek, making a gash that would have been fatal and disgusting, but in no way dangerous.

The rascal scrambled to his feet, thinking himself fatally injured, and fled into the saloon.
Robin tried to arise from the door, but, with the hair still bound to him, he was unable to do so.

Leo could not aid him, for she was also fast to a chair.

What could be done?

"It is nothing, Leo—wait! I will tell you," cried Robin, unlocking his mouth into your dear face. You look happy—"

"And I am sorry," replied Leo, "that I am so near your life!"

"No—yes! There is one."

"What is that?"

"The thought that I had to leave you and dear father in such a manner."

Robin laid his hand on her heart. Leo's head sank on her knees at her side, but she started up, crying.

"What is it, Leo? I am sure it is something!"

Then the tearful eyes of the true woman glanced down on the hand bandaged hand on the golden head at her knee.

"It was only a little pain. I have lots to ask you. Where—where—"

"Just tell me the truth!"

"A nod was the reply. Leo could not bring her self to utter that name just then. Leo has gone to Peaceful Pocket."

There was no longer any doubt—Justine Douglas and Old Hunch were one and the same.

"When will he return?"

"He said he might not be back till after nightfall."

"Does he—does he always—treat you so?"

"Treat me well! He treats me as if I were a queen! And I am the queen of his heart!"

"For her sake, I hope so."

"I will not say!"

"It was a moment's pause, and then the girl's voice slowly replied:"

"I will do it, if you will."

"In a moment of the eyes the sisters met, and Leo breathed a sigh of relief."

"What—to what you regret?"

"You frighten me!" said Leo, drawing back.

"You are so strong, you will not be able to hold me as I am!"

"You slipped around the other's neck and their heads were close together.

"Do not be alarmed, sister mine. Answer my question, please. What do you regret?"

"That I was compelled to separate myself from my home and friends!"

"Is that all?"

"That is all."

"Does he seem the same as of old?"

"Just the same—not, no. I understand him now."

"He has grown to man's stature, one of nature's noblemen! He has a heart as large as his whole body, and he is so tender and kind."

The black-haired sister told her lips to keep back the hot words which were trying to force an utterance, and she took good care that Leo could not see her face. The happy little wife rallied on:

"I know you thought he was handsome and manly in the long ago—"

"Well, yes. He is still handsome and more manly now. Oh, you will fall in love with him when you see him."

"God pity her! God pity her!"

"The listening ear heard her words."

"He is so gentle and good, and he loves everything that is brave and true. The one sorrow of his heart is the thought of his brother's crime."

"Why did he bring you away cut here—why bring you into this wild waste of a place?"

"It was to escape his brother, who he de clares is demented. Morris Douglas has sworn to ruin him—to destroy his life. He fancied Justine turned against him when they were boys."

"Has he heard from his brother since—the crime?"

"Yes, twice—both times a threat. That was our reason why we came here. Another reason was that he wished to drop out of the world, and he thought he would not be connected with the Doughs who perpetrated the crime."

"But I fancied the explanation were faulty in the extreme. Not for a moment did I believe those were Justine Douglas's words."

The golden-haired beauty started up, grasping:

"Father—"

"Who is he?"

"What is it? Tell me—tell me the truth! He—he is dead!"

Leo bowed, sadly.
Wild Bill's Sable Pard.

Bill took a brand from the fire, and, going to a mass of bushes, began to search about with the aid of the light.

He presently returned, bringing some scrub-like bushes which he had pulled up by the roots.

They had discovered a place where the water dripped down the rocks, and there Bill washed them off from the soot.

"There," he said, dividing with Joe, "this one is for you. The others belong to me."

He threw those roots, but do not swallow them. The juice will serve to make you forget your hunger for the moment.

So they sat down by the fire and chewed the roots, talking the while.

"One thing that is hard for me to understand," observed Bill, "is that Old Hunch who, with Justin Douglas, once so generously helped us all out of that scrape in the Pocket."

"He's a good fellow," said Joe.

"I can't understand it myself," he said.

"Ic is not possible there is a mistake?"

Joe shook his head.

"Yes."

"No, I don't know as I can."

Bill shook his head.

"You know as well as I."

"But what?"

"I read her secret in her eyes when she met the tenderfoot. She loves him already. A man with half an eye discerns that."

Joe could not deny it, for he had seen the same thing.

When they had chewed the roots for a time, the negro declared that he did not feel in the least hungry. Bill smiled at him.

"You will feel the craving of hunger all the more speedily when you have disposed of this tough piece. Then you will think that you can eat loaves and fishes, and then you will see what a mistake you have made."

Joe insisted on standing guard the first part of the night, for Bill thought it was best that one of them should remain on watch while the other slept. So the Pistol King lay down and left his Sable Fand on watch.

Joe replenished the fire and walked about for a time. Then he sat down and watched the line of moonlight creeping down toward the bottom of the ravine away to the right. He saw it would not touch the spot where they had stood, for that was not the line of it. But back away along the ravine toward the top of it, he saw that it was creeping down to light the bottom.

The long-drawn howl of some prowling animal sent a chill down the negro's back, for it was mournful and weird.

The hours slowly passed.

Joe had almost fallen into a drowse when something awoke him. He knew not what it was, but he was startled up.

A dead silence seemed to rest over everything. The moonlight was now flooding the ravine to the right.

Something attracted Joe's attention down toward the left. The fire was cut down to a low flame, and he was stripped into the deeper shade and gazed down toward the spot where the uniform line of moonlight lay between two dark blotches of shadow.

He saw something moving! It was swiftly crossing against the moonlit sleep
Wild Bill's Sable Pard.

“"What is it?" Joe asked himself. "It seems like something's going to happen." The figure disappeared, and then, after a moment, another was seen skulking across the patch of moonlight.

"Two of them!" thought the negro, his hand seeking his weapon. "And they're coming this way!"

What was that?

Nothing but the hooping of an owl. Joe laid it off as natural, and then, as he turned his head, another figure skulking across the moonlight path. He breathed hard.

A touch was sufficient. The Pistol Devil Shot up at the same instant. Joe was out of his coat and his rifle was in his hand. He fired.

"What is it?" he cautiously asked.

"Nothing, but I heard a noise." He arose and Joe drew him into the shadows.

Still another figure was crossing the moonlight path.

"That is the fourth. I have seen. And hark!—there it is again!"

The foot of the owl came up below.

Something like a growl escaped Wild Bill's lips.

"The dogs of Peaceful Pocket!" he softly explained. "They are on our trail! I imagine the whole town is down here.

They're probably after me!

"Well, I feel like remaining right here and giving them a battle, but it would not be good policy. We must get out.

As they started to steal away in the darkness, they were overpowered by four figures in front of them. It was answered further up the ravine:

The devils are on both sides of us!" grunted Wild Bill.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WHITE PARDS TURN.

This situation was starting to be the last, the men thought, when Joe suddenly came up and taken care to come upon them both up and down and they looked at the national pistols pointed at them at that point, there seems no way of escape.

"That is what those hippies of Satan think. calm down, Joe!" said Bill. "It is only that mighty strong bond to hold us, pard."

"Yes, of course!" Joe said, but he would not have relinquished hope while last lasted. His instinct was not to let go, by any means, of ideas which would have rifled defiantly at any cost. He was aware of the futility of this, but he never relinquished hope while last lasted. His intrinsically amorous intuitions were strong, and he knew that to consist in holding the doors.

"Well, if we have come that is the matter the other fellow, Joe."

"I wish, if we have come, to the quick report."

"Yes, and we need to be on our guard."

"The more the merrier. But we will give them the slip if possible."

"Yes, we must."

Joe followed, and they made their way along the ravine, keeping a watchful eye on the man that was in the front. They made their way along the ravine, keeping a watchful eye on the man that was in the front. They made their way along the ravine, keeping a watchful eye on the man that was in the front.

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Robin looked incredulous.

"I had far better fight for the evidence against you, for all of such an oath."

Justin's bearing was strangely touched.

"It was the treachery of Douglas soberly affirmed.

"I am ready to take my oath to that effect."

"That is not sufficient."

"I am not."

"I suppose so," he muttered.

"For a little while she collected herself, and then he said:

"When was this murder committed—at exactly what hour?"

"That I do not know."

"Lea cannot tell you for she left her for a little after she came out of the house. If the murder was committed before, she would have nothing to say to me to prove my innocence."

The two men stood side by side, and then Justin went to the back room to see how his wife was. He was not yet a little longer, the little he had to the interpreter.

"I think she will come round all right in time," he said.

"Lea is singing to her, and her back is toward me. Leas eyes bad leave me leave. Lois did not see me go in.

The night wore on.

At length she came from the back room, Lois leaning on Lea's arm. They came straight to Justin Douglas, who received them as they approached.

"Husband," said the fair-haired one, "Lea has escaped from the witness to prove your innocence. I am sure you can do that."

"Then, if you have any trust in me, let the trump of horns be heard outside at the appointed time."

Robin Rockwell leaped to the door and looked out into the moonlight.

"Masked hansom cab," he cried, pointing the door shut and placing the heavy bar.

Justin Douglas leaped to the window, looked at the hansom that was fast approaching, and then peered from a window.

"They are coming!" he said to the Trail Pirates!"

The horsesmen drew rein outside and Captain Shadow hailed: "Hello, with me!"

"Hello?" was Justin's reply. "What do you want?"

"Come out here, you."

"No, I do not want to come, you have your hands with blood on them."

"Then we will make you."

"I will not do it, you have your hands with blood on them."

"I want to talk business with you."

"Well, if you want to talk business with you."

"You refuse to come out."

"You have a woman in there?"

"That is true."

"You had better have some regard for her."

"I do."

"And that is not true?"

"I know the limit you set yourself, but you shall be made for this time."

With that, Captain Shadow wheeled and rode back from the cab. At a certain distance he halted and fired fiercely around him. There were six of them in all. The hansom manehin only to a sudden, and then Justin Rockwell commandan:"

"You refuse to come out."

Those within the cabin listened. To their ears came a soft cracking sound that drove the blood rushing to their ears and out of their heads. At that moment a shot went up from the Trail Pirates!"

"Great Heaven!" cried Justin Douglas. "Those devils have fired on the cab!"

"We shall be forced out by the flames, and then they will probably shoot us dead."

"It looks as if we were in a death-trap!" came from Robin's lips.

CHAPTER XVII

EXTENDED

The Trail Pirates!" he said, the negro as he brought them toward them. Wild Bill followed his Sable Pard, and when he came near the outlaw, he began singing and yelling like a whole tribe of Indians.

His first shot emptied two saddles and Black Joe brought down a horse.

The attack was quite unexpected, and the three surviving bandits instantly tore to the two of them to get away, but Bill succeeded in emptying another saddle in his escape, and then the negro crashed into us.

It was Captain Shadow whose horses had been shot off his feet and the four saddle horses were in frays. He was bayed up to the cab, then the four feet and Joe grapple-

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Chapter I.

BROADWAY BILLY SUMMONED.

Billy Weston, "Broadway Billy," and his pal Skinny—now grown almost into the proportions of an exhibition fat boy—and Old Roger the ranger—that was the trio resting at their ease in a Denver hotel. Billy, after chaffing Skinny about his fat, and stirring his wise young ex-street gangster up considerably by his bedding, finally "settled down to business," when a letter was put in his hand from the head-
Broadway Billy's Bargain.

"Good-morning, Mr. Mugleston," the detective greeted.

"Good-morning, Mr. Brandland," was the

"I have no news for you, sir," was the
answer, but come across the line with you. I have a proposition to make to you, Mr. Mugleston," the

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