

EVERY "BOY SCOUT" SHOULD READ THIS

AMERICAN WESTERN INDIAN

BY COLONEL SPENCER DAIR

NIGHT RIDERS OF THE NORTHWEST



"COME OUT AND MEET YOUR FATE LIKE A MAN!" HOWLED THE VIGILANTE LEADER.

AMERICAN

INDIAN

THE



AMERICAN WEEKLY INDIAN

BY COLONEL SPENCER DAIR

VOL. I

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Night Riders of The Northwest, or The Vigilantes' Revenge

By Colonel Spencer Dair.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

- JUBAL JANROWE**—In the over-true histories of some of the great gun-men, and outlaws of the West, it was once said that a "certain outlaw never worked alone." To this class did not belong Jubal, the fierce bandit of Mackenzie territory, in British North America. He had no gang of gun-men about him but he fought by himself nearly always, although two men, his wife, and himself may be said to have composed his dangerous band. The hold-up of the Coyote's Home, the main saloon in Dead Mines, Mackenzie territory, is one of Jubal's famous exploits, almost as interesting as his disguising himself as Tin Pan Pete, a peddler. Jubal Janrowe was an outlaw in a clash by himself, and his story shows the misdirected energies of a criminal. From his life, however, one moral can be gathered; one can fight even such odds as the Vigilantes of the North-West successfully, but not always. The law always wins in the end, as Jubal found before he went to his merited doom.
- SKINNY KATE**—The wife of Jubal Janrowe, the outlaw. She was a woman with a strong will, much bravery, who fought for the man she had married for many years but like him was swept away, he to his grave, and she to exile, owing to the chivalry of the territory in which she and her thug husband lived, as evidenced by a beautiful young woman. Yet, Mrs. Janrowe had personality, and also great bravery. Her attempt to save the loot of her bandit husband is a story of womanly devotion.
- CROSS EYED TIM QUENTIN**—Poor, devoted, thieving Tim. He served his purpose as the willing slave of Jubal Janrowe, the famous outlaw. It was a pity that "the game broke so for him." Tim might have been alive today had he not laughed at a revolver when held by pretty Nellie Liston.
- INDIAN JOHN**—A taciturn, thieving, red-man, and member of the trio of men which made up the Janrowe bandit gang. Indian John, a Louchieux, fought blindly, lived and died in a mad rush for life when the Vigilantes fired from a thicket at the red-man and his white bandit companions. John was not even missed by his companions, which is an epitaph in brief of his career.
- HUMPHY DAVIS**—A Dead Mines gun-man. He incurred the enmity of Jubal Janrowe and went to his grave at the sound of his rival's revolver in a gunfight between the two outlaws in the Coyote's Home, in Dead Mines, its leading saloon and gambling hole.
- DOC HILL**—The owner of the Coyote's Home saloon. He was something of a gun-man himself, and assisted in some ticklish bit of bandit work in a way that he had not reckoned upon. His feud with Jubal Janrowe is worth reading this story to find out about.
- WARTY COLLINS**—He figured in a gambling game in the Coyote's Home and almost for the first time in his life won. His winnings were taken from him to his great disgust when Jubal Janrowe held up the saloon.
- NELLIE LISTON**—Ah, here is a charming little girl, blond, young, beautiful and with brains, a wonderful combination in British North America or any where else. Nellie alone planned a ruse that saved thousands of dollars when Jubal Janrowe, the bravo, held-up the Fort Anderson coach one night. Nellie next assisted in relieving the outlaws of certain stolen property they had, and, as a female detective for the Fort Anderson line, figured largely in arousing the Vigilantes to crush out the Janrowe outlaws. Nellie is a main entity in this charming story of the North-West's real life.
- ERIC FLOYD**—A young man who lived in Dead Mines, British North America. He was a clean-cut type of the new world's young fighting man and the manner in which he met the duties thrust upon him in the Vigilantes' hunt for the outlaw, Janrowe, tells much of his character, and adds to the good opinion one has of the on-coming generation of fighting young men.
- SAM BATCH**—A member of the Vigilantes of the North-West, and a man who knew how to pull a gun quick and use it quicker on an enemy. Mawkish sentiment of mercy for a bandit did not lodge in his great heart.
- COMANCHE FRED**—Driver of the Fort Anderson stage-coach, which ran between Fort Anderson, British North America, and Dead Mines on the Anderson River. He assisted pretty Nellie Liston in her plot to cause the downfall of the outlaw.
- MR. AND MRS. LEARY AND KID LEARY**—The young man was a member of the Vigilantes, killed by the outlaw Jubal Janrowe. How the outlaw remembered the "kid" of the man he had killed, when he happened unwittingly to enter his home and talk with his wife, shows that there's sometimes a good streak in the worst type of outlaw. The mother of the child, and the widow of poor Michael, thinks so yet.

CHAPTER I.

OUTLAWS' RIDE FOR LIFE.

"Ride hard fellers!" shouted Jubal Janrowe, the

outlaw chief, to his companions, as he spurred his fine black horse to greater exertion.

"I'm making my beast put in his best licks," re-

plied Cross Eyed Tim Quentin, as his animal bounded faster ahead at the command of his rider.

"I r-u-s-h hard!" sententiously replied Injun John, a Louchieux chief.

The three outlaws dashed through the winding way of the Dead Mines Trail, which runs along Lake of the Woods, in Mackenzie territory, British North America, at the speed that defied pursuit.

It was well that the three men made good progress.

For behind them lay a story of atrocity that added to the terror which the names of the three bandits struck to every honest person's heart in the scattered hamlets and camps that dot the territory in such infrequency as to be but mere spots in a desert of wild land.

"We must make Lone Star ranch by midnight," added Jubal Janrowe. "There we are safe. Who's got the bullion an' gold-dust?"

"I hev," replied Cross Eyed Tim. "Ain't I th' candy-kid thet don't never fer-git the spondulick?"

"W-a-l-l, seein' as thar's about sixty-one tousan' dollars in thet hole-up, I tink ye'd better be keerful on it—whar ye carryin' it?" questioned Janrowe.

"In me sack," growled Cross Eyed Tim. "I dumps it outen' th' treasure box w'en ye was a shootin' up the stage-coach hosses. I wa'n't takin' no chanst, ye see, of gettin' thet heavy treasure-box slung up on me hoss."

Janrowe gave Cross Eyed Tim a pleased look.

"Thar's one thing I like about ye, Tim. Ye are allus lookin' outen fer us fellers and don't let the swag git away from ye," Janrowe remarked.

"Wall, seein' as we live by our gol' I ain't goin' ter let nuffin git away wen I sees it thet shines yaller. He! He! He!" replied Cross Eyed Tim.

The outlaws, meanwhile, had been spurring and whipping forward.

The danger from speeding over a narrow trail that led up hill and down into the dale, over a rocky, half broken trail, in the immeasurable depths of the magnificent forest, was exceeding.

The outlaws did not seem to fear the danger.

Their danger from a fall was nothing in comparison with the danger of pursuit.

For in the early dawn of the day they were trying to make the best possible speed to a place of refuge; the three men had held up the stage-coach that runs from the town of Dead Mines, on the Lake of the Woods, to Fort Anderson, a Hudson's Bay Company trading fort, on Anderson River in the depths of White Pass; and had taken all the gold-dust and bullion from the treasure box in one of the most dramatic hold-ups of a coach that the region had ever beheld.

The coach, to which four half broken bronchos were hitched, just as daylight broke with its faint streak of foggy mist through the blue black of the night, was swaying and lumbering along through the depths of the famous White Pass.

The road, not much more than a trail, wound along in the bowels of a canyon, the sides of which towered above it for thousands of feet, until it was merged into great peaks of mountains that pushed their way into the sky above to be decorated for their temerity with snow-white crowns.

From the bushes that skirted the road the driver of the coach, Comanche Fred, saw the form of a masked man appear.

The man was stalwart, black-bearded, beneath his

mask of a strip of white cloth; dressed in coat-turned frong-side out, a pair of buck-skin trousers, a red-flannel shirt, and a pair of high boots.

In each bronzed hand he held a shining revolver.

"Han's up!" he growled. "No palaver allowed!"

"Shore," replied Comanche Fred.

While now a stage-coach driver, Comanche Fred had gained his name in the fighting arena, where in the days now dead the wild Comanche tribe of Indians had brought into being the type of man who slew him whenever he resented the encroachment of the white-man.

Comanche Fred was a first class Injun-fightin' man, as he was called along the great frontier.

He did not quiver, therefore, when two revolvers were trained upon him but knowing that obedience meant life, disobedience meant death, Comanche Fred dropped his reins over the back of the off wheeler of his four-in-hand bronchos, and pushed his hands above his head while he awaited the next order from the road-agent, who had "held him up."

The command to stop, and its obedience was not quicker than the darting forward of Indian John, the Louchieux assistant to Jubal Janrowe, who had jumped forward and grasped the bits of the shying leaders and had firmly held them in the grasp of iron, which stilled the horses in a moment, for it communicated to them the feeling of a power greater than theirs.

Cross Eyed Tim Quentin, with his two enormous revolvers also in his brawny fists, chuckled to himself as he saw the bored air of Comanche Fred as he thrust his hands in the air.

"He's been thar before," sneered Cross Eyed Tim, waving one of his guns at Comanche Fred.

"Ye bet," smiled Janrowe. "Now ye git inter thet coach an' git them passengers out. I want all they've got. Look out! Ye better be quick fer there may be a gun-man in thar. If so he'd plug ye like sin 'fore ye could move."

Cross Eyed Tim, his face alight with the lust of the deed and the lure of gold, jumped to the high step of the coach, which, furled as it was, made a narrow ledge for him to rest upon.

"Han's up!" he cried. "Han's up, boy, er I'll fill ye full o' lead—hully snakes, wots this?"

Cross Eyed Tim nearly fell from the coach.

For when he looked into the interior, in the light of the flaring pine torch he had lighted just as he sprang to the coach step, he saw two tiny pink palms of two white hands sticking up in the air, above a blonde head of curling hair, which framed the regular face, frightened blue eyes, and trembling mouth of a girl not more than twenty years of age.

"Hey, thar!" cried Cross Eyed Tim to his chief.

"Thar's a gal in hyar!"

"Huh?" snapped Janrowe.

"A gal!"

"Shore?"

"Dead shore!"

"Wall, I'll be blamed!"

With this remark Janrowe signaled Indian John to come to his side.

"Git down offen thet coach," growled Janrowe to Comanche Fred.

Comanche Fred, still carefully holding his hands up in the air, essayed the difficult feat of climbing

from the driver's-box of a stage-coach to the ground with his head up and his hands up in the air.

It is a difficult feat but it can be done, "practic' makin' perfec'" as Comanche Fred expressed it.

"Now git ye ter that rock and set wit yar back ter the coach," commanded Janrowe. "An' John, you train yer gun onto him. Ef he as much as breathes ennach'ly ye gin it to him!"

Comanche Fred grinned. He also endeavored to breath "nach'ly."

Thus relieved of training his weapons of attack on Comanche Fred, the outlaw leader approached the coach.

"Please Mr. Outlaw," a quavering voice issued from the coach. "I am dreadfully frightened! I hope there will be no bloodshed!"

Janrowe looked his amazement.

"Naw," he growled. "Ye ain' in no danger. Naw, not a bit! Say, ef ye has any valooables thet ye wants ter gin' a poor feller wot sadly needs em, I'd be obleeged, an' ef ye has any money I'd be glad ter relieve ye o' packin' it around."

"I have only a dollar and sixty-five cents left in the world," the pretty girl in the coach asserted. "I haven't any jewlery at all, and if the money will do you any good, why if you will let me put my hands down I will oblige you. I have the money tied up in my pocket handkerchief."

Janrowe snorted.

"Say, gal," he said with grim irony, "my fellers ain't used ter carryin' so much cash! Now, I'll tell ye what I'll do. I'll gin ye thet cash as a present from Jubal Janrowe's boys—I ain't givin' nuttin away lately 'cept some bullets, an', say, your a pooty good looker an' ye kin see thet ye ain't got nuttin by yar looks ter git on wit', fer one dollar and sixty-five cents ain't much of a grub stake up hyar—wots ye goin' ter go fer at Dead Mines?"

"I'm going to Dead Mines—it's quite a city isn't it?—to see a lady named Floyd; she is an old school friend of my mother's back in Denver, and I'm going to Dead Mines on a visit."

The outlaw grunted.

"Do you know a Mrs. Floyd there—a Mrs. Henry Floyd?" asked the girl in a chatty, conversational way.

The outlaw shook his head.

"Naw," he said. "Ye see I ain't goin much inter sacciety this winter!"

The girl laughed. It was a merry tinkling laugh. It was so happy that the outlaws liked to hear it.

"Say, ye laugh like the sound o' them boids in them mountaints about us," gallantly said Janrowe, whose face relaxed into something of a smile.

"What a very polite outlaw!" cried the girl. "I think I like outlaws!"

Then she speculated a moment.

"Where did you say that you heard those birds?" she asked of the outlaw.

"In these hyar mountaints," simpered Janrowe. "But whar we air a goin' wen we gits this game pulled over seems ter me theys bigger boids."

"Where is that?" asked the pretty girl with an appealing look in her great blue eyes.

"Over ter Lone Star ranch; that's th' place whar me an' my gang meet."

Cross Eyed Tim plucked at Janrowe's coat at this moment.

"Don't tell all ye know," he hissed. "Ye don't know nuttin about thet gal!"

The girl shrank visibly.

"What a rude man," she said vindictively to Janrowe.

Janrowe hurled a volley of curses at the head of his follower.

"Ye git thet treasure in yar kick," he shouted, "an' don't chip in when th' boss is talkin'."

Cross Eyed Tim winked and went about his work of opening the steel treasure box which he had pulled from its niche under the driver's seat of the coach with a will, while Injun John, who still had his gun trained on the unflinching back of Comanche Fred, laughed in quaint Injun chuckles.

"Gal got boss buffaloed?" John said.

"Wall, she is purtty enough ter git most any man inter a transt," said Fred.

"Where you git gal?" questioned Injun John.

"Up ter Fort Anderson. She's a tenderfoot from Denver. Never been in these parts she sez t' me, an' she acts it—say, she stopt the coach oncet t' git out and git some wil' flowers."

"Yep. Tenderfeet, all right!" replied John.

He knew the brand, it would appear.

Meanwhile Janrowe and the pretty girl were having no end of fun.

"What's yar name?" asked Janrowe.

"Nellie," lisped the girl.

"Nellie what?" questioned the outlaw.

"Nellie Liston," replied the girl.

"Well, Nell, you're a little thoroughbred," the bandit said. "You're a dead game little sport and I wisht ye well!"

"One moment, please, what is your name?" asked Nellie.

"Jubal Janrowe."

"Not the horrible outlaw, Jubal Janrowe?" asked the girl in mock horror. "I don't see anything horrible about you!"

Janrowe smiled grimly.

"You've seen th' best part o' me," he said. "I some times ain't so easy. I hev shot up some places an' they say I've shot-up some men. In this hyar case, seein' ez I didn't hev no trouble in holdin'-up this hyar coach, I jest take it easy an' wen I sees a gal as neat as ye are I jest puts on me comp'ny manners ter her—see?"

A charming smile spread over Nellie's face.

"How sweet of you," she said. "Now you have been so nice to me I'm going to tell you something that I think you would like to know."

"Wot is et?" asked Janrowe.

"What is the Vigilantes?" the girl asked, artlessly.

The outlaw's face grew dark with suspicion and anger.

"Wot d' ye mean?" he cried.

"Tell me what the Vigilantes are and I will tell you what I mean," rejoined Nellie.

"They are a body o' men thet don't like me ner me band," growled Janrowe. "Theys law an' order men, an' they usu'y ketches some o' me band an' hangs em ter the nearest tree—I lost four men last month thet way—trees ter hang my men on seem ter be pretty thick hyarabouts."

Nellie nodded.

"Well," she added, "about ten miles back—maybe

not so far—we passed about fifteen men on horse-back and I heard one of them yell as we went by that 'the Vigilantes were out after Jubal Janrowe'—that was all, and as you've been so nice to me, and your name you say is Jubal Janrowe, I thought I'd just do what my brother in Denver says, 'put you wise'—"

Nellie got no further.

Jubal Janrowe jumped into the attitude of the fiercest outlaw in the great North-West with surprising ease.

Gone like a mask thrown away was his air of bearish gallantry he had assumed when talking to Nellie.

"Hi, boys!" he shouted, "Vigilantes are up! Quick woiick now!"

The two outlaws, Crossed Eyed Tim Quentin and Injun John, worked with feverish haste now.

They rushed into the bushes, lead forth their horses, mounted and rode away like the wind.

For the space of half an hour neither Comanche Fred or Nellie Liston spoke a word to each other.

Then Nellie laughed in her same bird-like way.

"They fell for it!" she cried.

Comanche Fred took a chew of tobacco and laughed in glee.

"Rather," he said. "Them outlaws took the hook liken ter a trout does a fly wen his hongry. To think this hole outfit is a fake one! Nellie ye are the slick-est little detective in all the North-West!"

Nellie laughed.

"Do you know what was in that 'treasure box'?" she cried.

"Naw."

"Pyrities of Iron—otherwise *fools-gold*," the girl cried.

The stage-coach was a "fake-game" put up by Nellie Liston.

It started out from Fort Anderson just one hour ahead of the real coach with sixty-one thousand dollars worth of gold-dust aboard, four days before, all fixed up to look like the real coach of the line, because it had been feared that Jubal Janrowe would try to hold up the first shipment of gold from the Anderson River mining district to Dead Mines, on the Lake of the Woods, where it would be coined into bullion bars and sent to Ottawa, where it would be sold and the currency returned as soon as possible.

As had been expected, Jubal Janrowe and the outlaw band he commanded had held up the fake-coach.

It was the work of Nellie Liston, girl detective and guard of the Fort Anderson Coach Company, which owned the lines of the endangered coaches.

"Haw! Haw!" cried Comanche Fred. "Them chaps are beatin' it wit a lot of *fools-gold*. Haw! Haw! Haw!"

"And I got out of Janrowe where he was going! That will be good news for the Vigilantes, eh?" cried Nellie. "Drive on to Dead Mines, Fred, as fast as you can go."

The coach rocked and swayed as Comanche Fred, three minutes later sped onward for the hamlet of Dead Mines.

"Now for a brush with the outlaws at Lone Star ranch," thought Nellie, as she smoothed out her golden hair.

CHAPTER II.

THE LONE STAR RANCH.

The speed with which the outlaws rode for life, after hearing Nellie Liston's news, did not slacken, save when absolutely necessary to breathe weary horses.

It was fifty miles from the point in White Pass where the Fort Anderson fake-coach had been held-up to the haunts of the outlaws, at Lone Star Ranch over a wretched trail, but the outlaws, led by Jubal Janrowe, negotiated it with great ease considering the going and it was late in the night when they reached home, regularly used up, but, as they thought, safe from pursuit.

Skinny Kate, the wife of Janrowe, met the party.

She and the three men made up the entire outlaw band.

"I ain't much fer gettin' a lot o' men inter me gang," Janrowe was wont to say. "My two side poddners Cross Eyed Tim an' Injun John wit me ole' gal Skinny Kate, er 'nuff ter pull over anythin' thet we needs."

Indian John and Cross Eyed Tim, after the latter had given the sack with the "fools-gold" supposed to be the real dullish yellow metal the source of so much trouble to Skinny Kate, had hurried out to rub down the weary horses in a tumbled-down sort of barn near the log-cabin, where the gang lived when at the ranch.

"What luck?" asked Skinny Kate of her lord and master.

She was a tall woman about three years younger than her fierce husband who was now in the thirtieth year of life.

She was tall, a washed-out blonde, and had come from the United States years ago to share the fate of the outlaw, who had known her when he was younger in Minneapolis, which point, by the way, was the last one where Janrowe had lived an honest life; as a matter of record the name in which Janrowe had been known in Minneapolis was not the one he bore in British North America.

Janrowe had first reached the wilds of Mackenzie territory to become a trapper and a hunter.

He was naturally inclined to this life and would have been successful but he had early learned the ways of the gun-man and bandit of the territory and deviated from the straight path of honesty to the crooked one of dishonesty almost without an effort.

Unlike most bad-men of the territory Janrowe had graduated from honest man to bandit in a single night.

He had held-up an inoffensive stranger in the one straggling street of the hamlet after a night of gambling losses at the Nonpariel saloon.

The stranger had made no protest against parting with his "wad" at the mouth of Janrowe's good gun; and then and there the "easy money" game of the outlaw began; where would it end? That was a question not yet answered, but so far in his career of crime Janrowe had been successful.

A train of hold-ups, robberies, abductions, and shootings had marked the life of the bandit with a trail of blood; and now he was home again, and he felt happy at the proceeds of his hold-up of the Fort Anderson coach.

"It was this way, Kate," cried Janrowe, dropping from his tongue the bad grammar and the rough

language without which no man could be called outlaw in the North-West, "we have made a good haul this time for the coach had a lot of stuff on it and we got to it."

"How?" asked Kate, whose eyes gleamed with greed as she looked at the sack supposed to be worth so many thousand dollars.

"Well, some of my friends tipped me off that this coach would have the first month's clean-up of the mines about Fort Anderson which was to be sent to the big smelter at Dead Mines, to be made into bullion bars of gold and was then to be shipped off for Ottawa."

"I see," replied Kate.

"This fellow said that if I would hold-up the coach he would do the right thing in the way of tipping off, and I might stake him to something good next time I saw him."

"Yes—how much will you have to give him?"

"He will be clean satisfied with a few hundred in dust."

"That isn't so much—worth it, eh?"

"Sure!"

"So you had no trouble in holding up the coach?"

"Not a bit in the world! Nothing to stop us. Only passenger a chit of a gal without a cent in her pocket to amount to anything and 'fraid as could be of us. There was no guard on the box—"

"No guard?" wondered Kate. "You're fooling me, Jubal. No guard on the coach with sixty thousand and more odd dollars in the treasure box—say, what's the matter with that Fort Anderson Stage Company?"

"There was no guard for fair! I didn't think the coach company was so stupid as that, I can say myself, but by George, they were! There was only old Comanche Fred on the coach—he showed up his hands at my first word, and we did the trick as easy as taking cash from a baby."

"It's pretty good trick you have turned, isn't it? Divide it between us all, and counting your share and mine as one, and giving Cross Eyed Tim and Injun John one each, there's a matter of a trifle more than twenty-thousand each in that hold-up."

"That's right!"

"With what we've got besides it's a pretty good haul. Let's get out of the territory and spend it, eh?"

Janrowe speculated a moment. The plan was a good one. He was getting weary of the trouble that the outlaw life brought back to him in a train of attempts to kill him, or arrest him every time that he did an extraordinary bit of crime.

On the other hand, he was not sure that he could get out of the territory unscathed. The Vigilantes—the organization to quote from one of its leaders, being a band that "was feared a great deal more than the Almighty."

It was to the Vigilantes, that the territory looked now for its release from the thrall of bloody deeds such as Janrowe and his gang were in the habit of committing.

The Vigilantes came, they saw, the conquered.

No one knew who led the band of visitors; no one knew who were in the ranks of the organization.

They were the *Night Riders of the North-West!*

In secret they met.

In secret they doled out death to this outlaw; banishment to that one.

Then led by one who was fearless and brave, in the darkest hour just before dawn, the *Night Riders of the*

North-West visited the home of this outlaw or that gunman; this thief or that desperado, and where death had been decreed left a still, cold body of a man, who had only a few moments before been a breathing desperado; or left a written warning with some thug that the territory could get along without him, a summons that to disobey made a quick trip to the grave; no one disobeyed the order to "jump the territory."

Not wishing to frighten his wife, the outlaw did not tell her of the statement made by the girl in the robbed coach, that the Vigilantes were after him, but after a long pause replied that her plan of "jumping the territory was a good one and worth thinking over."

"I tell ye, Kate," the bandit chief added. "I'm thinking if we are going to get off at all we must get off quick—there's some people gettin' rather busy with our affairs."

"That's right," said Kate. "I rode over to Dead Mines when you were gone an' there was something doing there I didn't like."

"What was that?" asked Janrowe his eyes beginning to snap with an angry light.

"You know Doc Hill?"

"Doc Hill, the dance house keeper?"

"Yes."

"Sure—what about him?"

"Well, I was riding by his saloon—"

"The 'Coyote's Home'?"

"Yes, that's what he calls his place."

"All right. Go on!"

"Doc Hill calls to me, and of course I stops."

"Certainly! I suppose you knew that there was trouble on between Hill and I—and you were heeled?"

"I had my gun right in plain sight by the pommel of my saddle. I just took hold a minute, fearing I would have to use it, for I know if Doc Hill has been drinking some of the poison stuff that he sells in his saloon, dance-house, and gambling place combined, that he'd just as leave shoot a woman as a man."

"Good! You were ready for him?"

"Precisely! Well he didn't make no motion to draw nothin'—he just stood there with an evil grin on his ugly face."

"I looked him over that way the last time I saw him, and he didn't dare draw anythin' but his breath and he drew that mighty quiet while I was lookin' at him."

"Well, this time after he had looked at me a long time he said, 'Mrs. Janrowe, can ye take a message to your husband?'"

"'I can,' said I, 'and deliver one back to you from him by the way of this gun, if you get gay with me,' I pointed to my gun as I spoke."

"'Good girl!'" he sneered. "'It ain't necessary. It's just a straight message for your husband.'"

"Go ahead with your story, Kate, this is mighty interesting."

"Doc Hill, laughing like said this—'Tell your husband that there isn't room in Mackenzie territory for both of us!'"

"He said that, did he?" said Janrowe in a soft tone of voice. "Well, I guess that means *business*, that message! I'll have an interview with that gentleman in the next few days."

"He added," continued Kate, "that if he didn't get you in the next week the *Vigilantes* would!"

Jubal Janrowe knew now what fear was.

He understood this was a quiet tip from the man who was his enemy, yet, being even that, was anxious to tell him that he was in danger of the Vigilantes' wrath.

"Well," Janrowe said with a swagger, "a man can die but once! I'm going to Dead Mines tomorrow to look into this thing. There'll be some shooting going on when I get there."

"Don't get rash," advised Kate.

"I am something of a gun-man anyway," said her husband with a gleam that meant trouble, in his eyes.

CHAPTER III.

THE VIGILANTES HOLD A MEETING.

Sam Batch's cabin on the outskirts of the hamlet of Dead Mines was filled with men.

Sam Batch was a well known man in the town.

He had been superintendent of the mines that had "went dead," as the mining men expressed it, meaning that they had stopped being able to produce ore of value.

Before this the place had been called The Mines.

When there were no more mines it became Dead Mines.

This usually marked the fate of a frontier town and when the mines petered out the town petered out also.

In this case, however, the town lived because it was a natural and geographical link between Fort Anderson and the trail and stage-coach road that led far away to civilization, and although the town dwindled from a place of several thousands to a place of several hundreds, Sam Batch, the superintendent of the mines that were "dead" having no job any more started a regular frontier post-store, where he sold everything that the frontier man needed save whiskey, or any other liquors, taking his pay either in peltries of fur-bearing animals, in game, or in anything that by any possibility could be used for trading purposes.

In course of time Sam Batch's place became the center of the orderly element of the territory, and when the gun-play got too numerous, when the outlaws that infested the territory got too numerous, it was natural that Sam Batch's cabin-home, a rough house of logs should be the place where the Vigilantes of Mackenzie territory should meet and talk over conditions.

There was every man in Dead Mines that amounted to anything in the way of business, or standing.

Eric Floyd, the son of Mrs. Henry Floyd, was there, and Eric was something of a personality in the country.

His father had left him no end of valuable timber land; and a substantial bank, where most of the business of the territory for several hundred miles around was done; he was a clean cut young chap dressed in kahaki, and whose face, like that of every other man in the party, was masked.

In fact there was great care that no one should know any one else absolutely in the ranks of the Vigilantes or *Night Riders of the North-West*.

While possibly one member might suspect that the next member seated nearest him was such and such a person; the masked face of each made only a suspicion of identity possible; no one really knew whom was seated in the next chair.

The presiding officer, also masked, sat in the centre of the room and although there may have been suspicions as to who he might be unmasked, it was likewise only a suspicion.

"It seems to me," said the presiding officer, "that we had better take up the question of Jubal Janrowe."

"I think so, also," replied a second masked figure. "He has been running wild for some time."

"Shall we make him a visit?" asked a third man.

There was a babble of conversation on this point.

There seemed to be a diversity of opinion as to just what ought to be done with the desperado. Some were for a visit and the usual execution by hanging to the nearest tree, quite as the Vigilantes always end their little visitations.

Others were in the habit of thinking the easiest way the best—these thought a warning to "jump the territory" was punishment enough.

"But," roared a big man, who sat near the end of the circle nearest the entrance door, and who had been observing a good deal and up to this time saying nothing, "are you going to try this chap or not? I don't hear that there has been advanced anything so far that would mean he was in our province. Many have said he was a desperado, but then, what of that? Many desperadoes live in Mackenzie territory, you know."

There was a lull in the conversation when the speaker tuned up.

"That's right," came a voice from across the little room. "Some one that knows ought to tell us something about this man, Jubal Janrowe. I don't know much about him for I come from afar."

"I think I can say a few things," said a young man, whom several in the room knew was Eric Floyd. "I have had some dealings with this man, Janrowe, and possibly I can help."

"Speak up," cried the presiding officer.

"In the first place, Jubal Janrowe has been a gun-man in these parts for the last three years. In a saloon fight to my knowledge he has killed several men."

"That is not greatly to his discredit if they were fightin' men like himself," the chairman said smoothly. "We have all had our gun-fights."

A low laugh went around the circle of men in a ripple of amusement.

There was hardly a man in the room but knew what it was to fight for his life in the wild frontier saloon battles; and most every man in the room had "killed his man" but always in pure self-defence.

"Then we know that he is a hold-up man," smoothly remarked Eric. "We have pretty positive proof that he held up the Fort Anderson coach a few nights ago."

There was an excited roar from the men listening to Eric's words.

It was one thing when a gun-man shot-up his fellow gun-men; unless decent citizens were drawn into the fight it did not matter much how often one of the desperado brood killed another one of the same kidney.

But a hold-up of a coach was a different proposition.

Property was in danger not human life.

Property was accounted to be of more value than a life anyway in the North-West!

There was great indignation when it was stated openly that Janrowe, the outlaw, had held up the Fort Anderson coach.

"The dissolute brute must be punished!" roared one of the assembly, who waved a great revolver to punctuate his remarks.

"He is a villainous fellow," cried a second Vigilante who showed the hilt of a Bowie knife as he spoke in a significant manner that meant that he was quite as ready to use it as to show it.

"We had better corral that chap before he gets more numerous," another speaker said.

The expressions of opinion were numerous and somewhat divergent.

In the middle of it all the tall man seated near the door arose.

"It seems to me," he said with a good deal of quiet strength, "that while a lot has been said about the desperado, Jubal Janrowe, that nothing has been said in favor of him—while he is a bandit, to be sure, there hasn't been any charge brought against him that he is a murderer has there?"

"N-o-o," replied the presiding officer.

"I don't think any man here," added the stranger, "would say that shootin' another bad-man in a gun-fight in a saloon is murder, would he?"

"N-o-o," replied the presiding officer.

"I should say not," replied the stranger. "You might call it suicide to kick up a muss with a gun-man unless ye had *your* weepin handy, and could get it out quicker than the gun-man could git to his weepin—but taken all in all you fellers here haven't said much about Jubal Janrowe 'cept that he has held-up a few coaches and generally been a Road Agent in these parts. Is that a hangin' crime? No, I should say not! It's a crime you might warn the chap to skip on, but I don't think it no crime that warrants a *hangin*—not me!"

"I don't know about that," spoke up young Eric Floyd. "A man that is a man can protect his life from any gun-man that ever lived. But he can't protect his private property because he don't know when it's going to be taken. He can watch out for his life seein' as he can tell, if he is a *man*, when the other fellow is going to draw, but to have a lot of gold-dust of his in the treasure box of a stage-coach, and then have this chap Janrowe jump out of the bushes and pull a gun on the coach driver and rob the man here of his gold-dust that he hasn't a chance to protect, is pretty near a hanging crime, seems to me."

Eric had voiced the territorial view of the matter and the murmur of applause that ran round the room showed that there was a substantial following that supported Eric's view of the matter.

The defender of Janrowe was plainly very nervous but he said nothing more feeling that it was useless.

The presiding officer held up his hand.

"We will now stop further argument pro or con," the presiding officer said in a judicial voice, "and we will take a vote now on the question of the disposition of the Vigilantes of Mackenzie territory, otherwise known as the *Night Riders of the North-West*, as to the proper mode we are to take in dealing with the desperado Jubal Janrowe. Those in favor of warning this gun-man to 'jump the territory' hold up their hands!"

There was quite a sprinkling of hands when the presiding officer spoke.

He calmly counted them.

"Fourteen seem to favor the running out of the territory of Jubal Janrowe," said the presiding officer in announcing the count.

There was a sigh of surprise from many in the room. It had not been thought that there were so many present who favored the plan of "running the outlaw out."

"We will now vote upon the question of hanging Jubal Janrowe," continued the presiding officer.

The showing of hands was soon counted.

"Fifteen hands favor the execution by the Vigilantes of Jubal Janrowe, the outlaw, against fourteen voting in favor of running the outlaw from the territory."

There was a gasp of pleasure from those who favored the death of the desperado at the announcement of the result of the vote.

The tall stranger stood by the door when the vote was announced.

He seemed to tower over the heads of the Vigilantes. His deep voice rang through the room.

"It is one thing to vote for the death of Jubal Janrowe," he sneered, "and another thing to execute the man. You have to catch a man to hang him."

"Who are you that thus disturbs our deliberations?" cried the presiding officer.

The stranger tore off his mask.

"I am Jubal Janrowe," he roared. "Now who wants to come forward and hang me?"

Two revolvers glittered in the desperate hands of the outlaw.

CHAPTER IV.

HUMPHY DAVIS GETS "HIS."

"It's my night to h-o-w-l-l!"

Humphy Davis, gun-man, and desperado was on a "drunk."

He entered the saloon of Doc Hill, the Coyote's Home, about ten o'clock on the same night that Jubal Janrowe, his bitterest enemy, and a fellow outlaw, had effected his disguised entrance to the deliberations of the Vigilantes.

Davis was known as a bad-man with a gun.

Naturally of a peevish disposition his malformation which gave him the distorted appearance of a hunchback, and thus gave his popular name of Humphy Davis, had all added to his irritable nerves and when intoxicated he was popularly called "a terror."

He always lived up to this distinguishing appellation.

Doc Hill, when he saw Humphy enter his saloon with the remark on his lip that he was about to "howl," scented trouble.

The gun-man is very fond of "howling" like a wolf and shooting like a fiend immediately afterward.

So Doc Hill, who had a reputation as a gun-man himself, just hitched a revolver along the little shelf behind the bar where he kept his stock of glasses, and thus had a weapon ready for his hand to grasp in case Humphy turned loose.

"Hello, Humphy!" Doc cried with a smiling face, "what's the poison going to be tonight?"

Humphy, pulled up in the full tide of his song, glared like an angry bull at Doc Hill.

Humphy in spite of his deformity was a tall man, strong, and of a blonde type.

He was not as high up in the scale of thugdom as his great rival Jubal Janrowe, and consorted with a lesser degree of criminal element, mostly of the "bad-Injun" type.

Petty robbery, a few minor hold-ups, some shooting of other desperate men and a general disposition for minor crimes was the best that Humphy had ever essayed so far as the hamlet resident in Dead Mines ever knew.

But there was several ugly shootin'-scraps chalked down against Humphy and the Vigilantes had more than once considered him.

This Doc Hill knew. So in a soothing tone he said to Humphy, as the hunchback drank a portion of firey whiskey, that he "had better take no chances just then as the Vigilantes were gettin' active, these days."

This remark only inflamed Humphy the more.

"Vigilantes?" he screamed in a fever of wrath. "Thar ain't no Vigilante on the airth thet kin do me—I'm a wolf, and I want ye ter understan' thet it's my night to *h-o-w-l-l!*"

"You won't howl but once if the Vigilantes hear that you're in town," sneered Doc Hill coming around from behind his bar in a leisurely manner, while a few steady customers, grouped about a faro table at one end of the room, looked up and then suspended the game, while they watched the outcome of the argument, meanwhile getting into easy positions indicating a desire to get away from any possible flying bullets in case of a "shooting-up" on the part of Humphy.

"He will shoot," one man muttered to another. "Humphy isn't goin' to take any chanst w'en he's in liquor."

"Doc is lookin' fer a chanst ter git his gun—Doc's a good feller! He won't shoot in his own place 'less he hez ter save his life."

The remark of Doc Hill simply drove Humphy crazy.

His hand jerked his gun out of his holster with the wonderful ease and suppleness of the regular gun-man.

There was a motion; the gun was out; so quick that it seemed like the quiver of a serpent's tongue yet as quick as the motion of Humphy that of Doc Hill was quicker.

As Humphy jerked out his gun, Doc caught his wrist just back of his hand with a grip like that of a vice.

The motion did two things.

First it stopped the upward direction of the gun in Humphy's hand; next it exploded the weapon in a bewildering crash.

The bullet went harmlessly into the hard-board walls of the dirty little place, and then with a quick wrench, Doc had Humphy's gun, and the trouble was about over.

As there was to be no shooting after this, the men at the faro table turned back to their gambling game, leaving Doc and Humphy to "chew the rag" and settle their misunderstanding as they chose. There was no use talking further, so far as they were concerned, over the misunderstanding now that the shooting end appeared to be eliminated.

Humphy swore in bitter rage at Doc Hill.

"Don't be a fool," Doc cried. "Humphy, it isn't going to do you any good to howl like a wolf this trip. I tell you, man, I ain't no enemy of yourn. I'm your friend. Get off this booze fight and keep things under your hat. You are marked, I tell you, by the Vigilantes and you ought to be getting out of town and not be trying to make a muss over nothing in my saloon."

The words of Doc only seemed to make Humphy wilder in his anger.

Then Doc got mad too.

"Look here, you cheap thief," he cried to Humphy, "let up! I tell you death is near you, my man. You are fooling along into your grave. You take it from me that you're liable to be hanged by the Vigilantes any minute."

Doc said this slowly and looked in the eye of Humphy as he spoke the words. The language some how or other rushed into the drink-crazed brain of the outlaw and he partially sobered up. He knew that Doc was not a "hot air pusher" but meant what he said.

"You're a good feller Doc," Humphy said. "Don't say nuttin' more. Le's hev a drink."

Doc nodded.

"All right," he replied, "we will have a drink if you will jump the town quick. You go home and pack up before you get into trouble."

As he spoke Doc handed Humphy back his gun.

The two men drank together and then Doc leaned over the bar and continued his conversation.

"Look here, Humphy," Doc remarked in an easy tone, "you know I don't chuck any bluffs, don't you?"

"Thet's right," replied Humphy.

"Wall, feelin' thet way, let me say something to you. You and Jubal Janrowe hez had an argument, hasn't ye?" added Doc.

"Waal, thar's bad-blood between us for some time, you know. He sez——"

"Never mind going into the argument," checked Doc. "I don't care anythin' about it. You jest said it all w'en ye said thar was blood feud on between you and Janrowe. Now what I was going to say is this—Janrowe hez been seen in Dead Mines, loaded to the gunwales with weepins an' he was a *lookin' fer you.*"

"Lookin' fer me?"

"Yes."

This sobered Humphy quicker than anything that had been said to him.

In the light of event in the North-West when one bad-man "looks" for another there's trouble in the air.

Humphy knew this as well as any gun-man on earth.

"Wall," he sneered, "I ain't goin' ter take down fer no man on earth. Wot's Janrowe huntin' fer me on?"

"He thinks you told the Vigilantes too many facts about him," said Doc Hill.

"He's locoed! He's plumb locoed! I tell the Vigilantes? Wall, I guess not! I ain't so friendly with them pups thet I kin afford ter talk to 'em much."

There was a shadow of something that appeared to creep in the room. Just what it was no one seemed to know; but every man felt a little electric tingle go through his body.

Something was going to happen; possibly it was the feeling that one has at times popularly called the "feeling that some one has stepped on my grave."

Then the shadow which was first seen near the door crept in.

"Look out! There's Janrowe," cried Doc Hill, as he ducked down behind the bar to escape any flying bullet.

The faro-players slid under the table. One man jumped out of an open window.

Two desperadoes faced each other in the dim light of the bar-room.

The plain-wood bar polished to a dirty white made a good backing for Humphy as he swung against it pulling his revolver with a quick twist from its holster and taking dashing aim at the form which stood crouching in fighting gun-man pose just under the shadow that flitted toward the main door of the saloon.

In turn Jubal Janrowe pulled his weapon.

The gun-men's battle had begun!

CHAPTER V.

ERIC FLOYD SEES A LIGHT.

"Yes, he attended our Vigilantes meeting and stuck us up at the point of his gun," said Eric Floyd.

"He's all right, now you will admit that?" a girlish voice answered.

Nellie Liston, detective in the employ of the Fort Anderson Stage Company said the last words in an admiring tone of voice.

The clever young girl had reached Dead Mines in the "fake-coach," with Comanche Fred on the box driving proudly, and neither had "let on" of the trick played on the outlaw, Jubal Janrowe, nor had they told of the "fools-gold" of which he was possessed in what he thought had been the crowning financial career of his life of crime.

The two, Comanche Fred and Nellie Liston, were anxious for results in the way of rounding up Jubal Janrowe, outlaw, and did not take any one into their confidences as to the fact that the "fake-coach" had been robbed.

Nellie went directly to Mrs. Floyd's home, where she told a pathetic story of the hold-up in words painting her distress and fear in a manner that made Eric Floyd tingle with anger and a desire to forthwith shoot the bandit who had so frightened his mother's delightful visitor.

Mrs. Floyd, one of those moony women whose head is in the very top-clouds so often, was easily persuaded by the fascinating Nellie into thinking that she had invited the girl to come from Denver to visit her, and that Nellie was the daughter of some school girl friend; while to be candid Nellie had not heard of Mrs. Floyd up to the beginning of her ruse to get the gold-dust "by" the outlaws raid, which it was feared was to be tried out.

So while there was much talk about the hold-up of the "fake-coach," the fact that a few hours behind the fake one an extra coach ran into and out of Dead Mines, caused no comment at all—but in the last coach went speeding the real gold-dust, while Nellie remained in Dead Mines for the purpose of continuing her quest for Jubal Janrowe, for she felt that her detective work was only half done if she allowed the man who held-up her coach to escape final justice.

"Well," admitted Eric after he had speculated somewhat upon the girl's words. "I guess it was pretty sandy."

"Did Jubal get away with it?" questioned Nellie, who had private reasons of her own for wishing to hear all the news of the doings of the bandit from Eric.

"Explain."

"W-e-l-l! Somewhat!"

"You know what happens when a man sticks a gun out and declares himself?"

Nellie was wise beyond her years in the outlaws' methods. She laughed in a tinkle of merriment.

"When a man sticks a gun out in his fist and declares himself at the same time," she said, "there isn't much room for argument in any way."

"Not much," admitted Eric. "You see, we just were plainly floored when the masked man we thought was one of our members proved to be the bandit Jubal Janrowe, and when we got our wits going and were ready to take a chance and rush Jubal, he just naturally jumped out of the door, near which he sat and disappeared."

"He hurt no one?"

"No. There wasn't time for much shooting. He declared himself, stood up about six feet or seven high, it seemed to me, bristled all over with revolvers and vanished into the night like a bally ghost!"

"Quick work, was it?"

"It was."

"He knows now that the Vigilantes have declared death to him?"

"He does."

"He fought for himself up to the last ditch—I fancy he would be glad to get away with a banishment sentence in safety."

"That is what we all thought."

"But now he knows the Vigilantes are up, he just will look out for himself and he will be harder to catch!"

"That's right!"

"Do you suppose he knew any of you men?"

"N-o. I may as well admit we were all masked."

"Oh!"

"You see, we don't let any one know our identity in the ranks of the Vigilantes."

"There was no way of any ones knowing that the masked figure near him, say, was some one he knew?"

"No one."

"Then so far as you all are concerned he knew nothing of your identity?"

Eric thought the matter over a moment.

"I don't think I would go as far as that," he said.

"I am afraid he knew me. I had several things to say, and my voice is one that is easily recognized even if I am masked."

It was Nellie's time to think matters over now. It was as she suspected, however, for from the first she knew Eric was so honest in his way of speaking that masked or unmasked any one who knew him at all would know whom he was with their eyes shut.

"Then, taking everything into consideration you may as well say that the outlaw Janrowe would know you from your voice?" Nellie said.

"No question of it, I fear," replied Eric.

"It therefore, seems to me, that there's one course for you to pursue."

"What is that?"

"Get your best revolver and go gunning for Jubal Janrowe, and also aid the Vigilantes to get him if you miss him."

"You know there's a committee from the Vigilantes after the fellow now," remarked Eric. "It's narrowed down to him or the organization. It's the first time that any one has ever managed to break

into our secret meetings and we all feel that when he did so and said that he had done so when he declared himself, that Jubal Janrowe sealed his own death-warrant."

"Nevertheless, I think it was a sandy thing to do. In fact while it was a fool thing to do, it was the best thing for Janrowe to do. He knew that he had the Indian sign on him for execution, and he might just as well stand up and tell you what he thought of you all as to crawl and get hanged like a cheap dog—yes, Jubal is quite a man. What did he say to you all?"

"Something about catching a man before you can hang him—something like that. I didn't quite understand exactly what he said. But it was along those lines."

Nellie chuckled.

"Good man, that outlaw," she said. "Handed it to you in your teeth, eh?"

"Rather!"

"Wasn't afraid of a man in the shop?"

"Not a bit."

"Ready to stand up and tell you all what he thought of you?"

"That's right."

"Did any of you take a shot at him?"

"Didn't have time. He moseyed before we could get action on him."

"Hum!"

Nellie had made up her mind now what course to pursue.

"You're a pretty descent chap—for a man—" Nellie finally said to Eric.

"Thank you!" he cried.

"And as I'm your mother's guest it looks to me as if I would have to do something that would show my appreciation of the courtesy she has shown me—to say nothing about your being a real nice boy, and I would like to do you a favor."

Eric opened his eyes. As he was twenty-six years old and Nellie was sweet and twenty, he rather objected to being called a boy, but he let it all pass and turned an attentive ear to the girl.

"Now," Nellie added, "I'm going to tell you a thing or two that's strictly a secret."

With a low bow from his sombrero that swept the ground Eric awaited Nellie's next sentence.

"It isn't polite to make fun of your young woman friends," Nellie said.

"Excuse me. You mean 'not to make fun of my pretty young women friends,' don't you?"

"Sakes alive," returned Nellie, "this young man isn't foolish enough to try and pay me compliments when he stands on the brink of his grave, is he? I verily believe that he is, at that!"

Eric turned a trifle redder than his healthy out door complexion of tan usually carried. He tossed his shock of brown hair back from his forehead and looked at the girl with his honest hazel eyes.

"Look here," he remarked. "You've got something to tell me, and you are casting about for the best way to say it, now aren't you, compliments or no compliments?"

Nellie nodded with a smile at the young man's discernment.

"You are what is called a 'fly' young person," the girl said.

"Now tell me what you wished to say?"

Nellie squinted her eyes as if peering into the future like a sooth-sayer of ancient days.

"I see a spot some fifty miles from here," she said in the whining, whistling voice of a fortune-teller.

"Good eyes, haven't you?" asked Eric.

"I see," added Nellie paying no attention to the joke, "that the spot I am looking for is on the Lake of the Woods trail—yes it's fifty miles from here a-n-d—"

"And what?"

"I see a name in-the-air-above-this-spot—very good, but can I read it—yes, faintly."

Nellie's eyes were turned up like a trance medium.

"What's the name?" snapped Eric.

"My control is an Indian Weeping Willow," ambled on the girl. "Seems to me that he don't get those words clear—no, they are too faint, I can't see the letters."

Nellie began to shudder like a ship in a storm, while Eric not fully certain in his own mind whether the girl was "stringing" him or was telling him facts drawn from a mediumistic bout with spirits of the other world.

While he wondered Nellie continued.

"I see a young man—why he looks like you with a gun in his hand riding for that spot fifty miles from here," the girl added. "Yes, I see him! He is going to meet and shoot Jubal Janrowe the outlaw—oh, now I see the name of the place."

"What is it?" asked Eric his face dark with purpose.

"Lone Star ranch," whispered the girl.

"Hah!" muttered Eric.

When Nellie opened her eyes again which she had purposely shut tight she was alone.

She laughed to herself grimly.

"Eric Floyd knows that when you are threatened by a gun-man, you must get to *your* gun first! I hope the boy won't get killed. He is a fine fellow."

Musing to herself the girl began plotting further for the destruction of the famous outlaw.

"A woman can plot even if she can't fight with the outlaw," remarked Nellie to herself. "I wonder if Jubal Janrowe has found out that he held-up a treasure box filled with fools-gold!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE GUN-MEN'S DUEL.

The flashing of revolvers, the smoke of the explosion of the cartridges they contained, and the noise of the detonating bullets as they whizzed in the narrow space of the bar-room of the Coyote's Home, made bedlam.

It would hardly have been thought that two notorious gun-fighters each a revolver shot of merit could have fired at each other point-blank not twenty-five feet apart and yet not kill each other at the first fire.

But there was a reason for this situation.

The lights of the saloon were made by placing small kerosene lamps on a big two inch pipe, which was filled with oil at one end.

This system gave a fitful supply of oil to each lamp and after all, each one shed but a shadowy light.

Thus the bar-room was partially in darkness and in shadowy light.

Jubal Janrowe, and Humphy Davis each practiced in gun-fighting in a saloon, crouched low, danced about from spot to spot and in the half light neither got a fatal wound in the first minute of the battle when each man sent six shots from his revolver flying toward his enemy.

It was then that Humphy dodged around one end of the bar.

From this partial shelter he reckoned that he would have breathing spell in which to get his second revolver into action.

But Janrowe saw immediately the trick of his enemy.

"Come out, ye houn' pup!" Janrowe yelled. "Come out and fight me like a man!"

He darted around the corner of the bar as he spoke.

It is strange how much depends on a second!

In pulling his second gun from his holster at his left hip, the muzzle caught.

This accident was only a fraction of a second but it was this fraction of time that cost Humphy Davis his life.

There was just a hesitancy in the getting of the gun going that gave the rival fighter the advantage he wished.

His revolver sounded!

He had pulled his second gun with exquisite neatness and despatch.

His shot struck Humphy Davis right between his eyes.

Both of Humphy's hands went high in the air. He spun around twice, his gun clattered to the floor, and he followed it in one great crash, stone dead.

Jubal Janrowe had "hunted" for Humphy Davis in great success!

There was one less gun-man in Mackenzie territory for the Vigilantes to deal with.

Without stopping to see the actual effect of his shot, Janrowe, snarling like a wolf robbed of its prey, turned toward the pent up men in under the faro table.

"Whar's 'Doc Hill?" Janrowe howled. "He sent me word thet thar wasn't room enough in this hyar territory fer me an' him. Whar's the cuss? Let him come hyar and back his words."

Not a sound resulted.

Doc Hill was wise. He remained tightly packed into a narrow space behind his own bar.

He was not feeling in a shooting mood just then. Doc was brave enough, but he had a little information that for gun-men in the present state of public opinion in Dead Mines, to figure in a shooting scrape meant possibly a visit from the Vigilantes.

He did not see how a fight with Jubal was going to help him any.

In fact he saw how it might end in his lynching, or banishment from the territory and as the Coyote's Home in spite of its name was a popular gin-mill in the hamlet, he had no mind to risk either life, or fortune, in a fool fight with the outlaw whom he knew was already under the Vigilante ban.

So Doc sat tight.

After glaring around the bar-room and seeing no further traces of any enemy, save the dead one weltering in his blood on the floor, Janrowe stalked from the room like an angry lion, and directly there came echoing back the sound of his horse's feet as they pounded away down the main street of the hamlet.

In a second the saloon seemed to be alive with a laughing, excited crowd.

Where all the men came from was a wonder. But here they were in a grand rush of talking, swearing, laughing people.

"Shooting-up here?" declared one visitor. "Who was doin' it?"

"Humphy Davis and Jubal Janrowe," replied a second man, whose face was smiling as if the entire tragedy had been arranged for his exclusive amusement.

"Who's dead?" asked a third person.

Some one pointed to the form of Humphy.

"Hully Gee! Got him 'tween the eyes," remarked Doc Hill, who had emerged from his hiding place. "Smart shot, now wasn't it?"

Half a dozen men then carried out the body of Davis, who would be buried the next day or two after a popular subscription had been taken up to pay the necessary expenses.

Humphy, who was on the verge of being lynched by the Vigilantes, after having been killed in a saloon fight by another desperado, in the popular heart became enshrined as a type of hero, owing to the fact that in his death he had given the town of Dead Mines the first fillip of excitement it had had since the Crazy Horse gold-mine had petered out.

On such unsubstantial pinnacles many other reputations for heroism often rest.

To a few of his cronies Doc Hill described the fight.

Everyone deeply interested listened with great pleasure. Where each man stood at the beginning of the fracas, how each man dodged here and there, up to the final shot which ended the life of Humphy Davis, was gone over again and again, and each move of the fighting desperadoes was criticised or praised by the experts, for not a man in the room but had figured more or less in saloon brawls.

"Wall," remarked a big Swede known as Warty Collins, "Thar's one thing I see, an' thet is that Jub Janrowe is now a goin' ter take t' the woods fer fair! It's him or the Vigilantes neow. Say, thar's sure pop trouble fer some one."

Wart voiced the public feeling.

Doc Hill spat meditatively.

"I've allus notice," he remarked with much unction "that thar's two sort o' phases in a reg'lar outlaw's car-eer."

"Wot are they?" queried Warty Collins, as he scratched several large wart like places on his gnarled face which had given him his name in the community.

"Wall," resumed Doc Hill. "Fust ye see the hold-up man, the Road-agent, an' the jest natch'l gun-fighter."

"Oh," said Warty.

"Then th' time comes wen th' bad-man gits mixed up in a shootin' like this here," remarked Doc Hill further. "Then he knows thet he's an outlaw fer fair. He either skips th' country or he goes plumb locoed an' kills an' kills everythin' on sight, like a war-party o' red Injuns, thet make et a pint o' honor ter kill everythin' they sees when on th' war-path from a miskeeter ter a man."

"Thet's so," replied Warty. "Now whar's Jub Janrowe goin' ter git ter?"

Again Doc Hill aimed a long stream of tobacco juice from his pursed up lips at a spittoon in the saloon a yard away from him.

The aim was unerring. After watching the shot and noting its accuracy Doc Hill continued his remarks.

"I don't think I ever hearn tell o' Jubal Janrowe runnin' from man or wild beast," he summed up with accuracy. "In fact I don't think thet thet outlaw will run."

"Ef he stays, wot then?" snapped Warty.

"I am arter thinkin' thet thar's goin' to be some trouble in this hyar camp of Dead Mines," replied Doc Hill with a final note in his gruff voice.

"Et looks thet way," rejoined Warty. "Wall, I guess I'll go hum an' clean up my gun. Looks ter me thet I may need ter hev it sure ter go off wen I calls on et. Ef thar's goin' ter be more shootin' in this hyar teown o' Dead Mines I just guess I'd like ter be in the centre on it."

From the cleaning of weapons and the general feeling all over Dead Mines that night, there were a good many other people who wanted to join Warty Collins, and be "in th' centre on it," when Jubal Janrowe took to the bushes as a regular wild-beast of a hunted man, as was now a foregone conclusion.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROBBERY OF THE BANK.

Not twenty-four hours later the town of Dead Mines got another thrill.

It came just after midnight when there were few people about.

In fact only the Coyote Home, the saloon of Doc Hill, was open at the time the thrill arrived.

It had been quite a night at the saloon.

Warty Collins had got his semi-monthly "jag" on and had started to break the bank at faro. He had succeeded in a measure. He had caused One Finger Pete, the faro-dealer, to sweat blood for three hours of fast play, and had cleaned up some two thousand dollars good and lawful Canadian money, when the game came to a sudden end.

A figure stood in the door way.

It looked to be about sixteen feet tall, Warty afterward declared, but, as a matter of fact the figure was really ten feet shorter.

The figure carried two revolvers, each with a big bore, that looked to all to be about the size of a tunnel as the man waved them hither and thither so that it covered every man in the place some twelve in number.

The attack had been well timed.

In fact it afterward developed that the game had been watched from the outside of the saloon through the window, and that no attempt had been made to hold up the place until Doc Hill was over at the faro table with a tray that contained a "round" of drinks which the winner, Warty Collins, had ordered for the house.

This placed every man in the saloon exactly in one position, and that was in a group about the faro table, so that one man, earnest in the use of a revolver in each hand could train his weapons upon all the men in the place at once.

The commanding position of the interloper came as soon as he had entered the room, every man in it saw quickly.

The ability to see when the other fellow has the "drop" on you is quite a gift in the North-West.

"Hands up!" cried the man with the two big guns. "The first man that disobeys gets the top of his head blown off him."

Warty looked up. He had half a mind to draw his gun and dispute the remarks hurled broadcast at the party, but one shrewd glance at the stranger stopped the motion Warty was making to his gun at his right side.

"It's Jubal Janrowe!" gasped Warty. "I'm all in!"

With these words Warty threw his hands in the air. "Now you blokes line up along the wall," cried Janrowe. "I ain't taking no chanst wit' any o' ye!"

Silently, led by Warty, each man with two arms pointing to the ceiling of the room walked with unobtrusive steps toward the side of the room where they silently ranged in a row, with Doc Hill at the head.

"Ha! Ha!" hissed Janrowe. "Say, you fellers look fine! I ain't goin' ter say thet I'm glad ter see ye but the fust thing fer me ter git is yer wads."

With these words Janrowe whistled softly.

A masked man darted into the room at the summons.

Care was taken that his identity should be unknown, but Doc Hill, who had a way of seeing behind many things, knew the masked figure was that of Cross Eyed Tim Quentin, the bosom friend of Jubal Janrowe.

"Sarch them fellers," snapped Jubal, pointing to the melon cutting mob he had lined up along the wall of the saloon.

Nothing loath, the masked man began the work of looting the gamblers.

Doc Hill never quivered when he was relieved of a bank-roll of some five thousand dollars which he carried in a money belt around his waist.

Warty Collins cursed like a pirate of the Spanish Main, when he was made to disgorge the two thousand dollars he had won at faro, and about seven hundred dollars besides of his own money.

"Don't thet beat the band," he mourned. "Thar's the fust time I've played bank in ten years an' won and when I do, Lordy, but that feller holds me up fer it!"

"Wall, ye ain't no wuss off then some fellers wot puts their cash in a bank, ter hav' it bust on 'em," cried Janrowe, "an' ye stands as much chanst o' gittin' yar cash back offen me as ye do off a busted bank. Haw! Haw! Haw!"

There are some jokes not funny enough for twelve men standing in a row with hands in the air.

Down the line went the masked figure while the profanity swept along the line as money, watches, valuables concealed in inner belts, all came to light under the searcher's active fingers.

"Wot ye git?" growled Janrowe.

"'Bout bushel stuff," replied the masked helper.

"Get the stuff in yar bag," cried the chief outlaw. "I'm seein' red now, an' ef I don't get outen hyar soon I'll be shootin' up some o' these fellers! Say, hurry, will ye?"

The masked figure hurried.

A thrill ran down the line of men when they heard Janrowe's words.

They knew the man.

But Janrowe whose sneering, smiling face with its coal black eyes appeared to glance everywhere had a grudge yet to pay off.

He pointed his gun in his right hand directly at Doc Hill's head.

"Here, you liver colored pup," the bandit cried, "come over hyar whar I kin tell ye what I feel like tellin'."

Doc knew better than to resist the order. He promptly stepped toward the outlaw.

"Now ye was the feller thet sent a message ter me, want ye?" Janrowe asked his face red with wrath, and a deadly light of danger in his eyes.

"Wall, I was hev'in' some talk with yar woman an' I guess I did send somethin' o' a message, an' a warnin' ter ye," replied Doc Hill, who knew that Mrs. Janrowe must have told her husband of her conversation with him, and that denial would not help him any.

"Yass. Ye said thet thar want room in Mackenzie territory fer me and you didn't ye?"

Doc nodded.

"Wall, I ought ter kill ye."

"Ye can do as ye please—ye hev the drop on me?" growled Hill.

"Wall, I ain't ergoin' ter kill ye pup, although I outer. I ain't goin' ter hev it said thet Jubal Janrowe, the outlaw, took no advantage o' any man! I'm hyar ter gin ye a warnin'! I'm comin' back ter giv ye a fair fight and a chanst fer yer life. Not one onto you in this room kin say thet I'm not givin' ye a chanst fer your dirty life. Ye heel yerself, Doc Hill, fer the next time I visits ye, *one onto us will bite the dust of the streets o' Dead Mines* an' don't ye fergit it!"

Doc Hill breathed freer.

At all events he wasn't going to be shot this time and he felt that he could take his "chanst" with a gun even against such a redoubtable fighter as the outlaw that stood before him.

"Thet's all! I've come hyar ter night ter give ye a taste o' me quality," said the thug at last. "I've got yar cash right hyar in me clothes, an' yar jewelry is thar in thet bag over me frien's shoulder—wall, thet will be about all ternight!"

There was a grin on the face of Janrowe as he backed out of the saloon.

He had held up the only bank in Dead Mines; the faro bank!

He had corraled the lawless men of the town in one fell swoop and had robbed the robbers of all they possessed.

For half an hour after the departure of Janrowe, the men in the saloon laughed and chatted but did not attempt pursuit in the slightest degree.

They knew how useless pursuit would be.

"Ef the Vigilantes cayn't ketch that thar chap," growled Warty Collins, "et is onpossible fer us ter do et, 'specially ez we hain't got no hosses handy an' Janrowe and his podner hed two pooty good ones jedgin' by th' sound they made w'en they gits goin'."

There was wise shaking of heads over this decision which was pronounced to be good.

"Wall," added Warty, "thet was the slickest thing thet ever I seen put over. I'll be darned ef 'twant wuth the mon ter be stuck up thet way! Hyar we is all th' gun-men left in Dead Mines an' one feller he gits to us an' lines us all up agin' th' wall while his side-podder goes through us. Heugh! Heugh! Heugh!"

While Warty coughed Doc Hill said nothing.

He was seen to be quietly cleaning up his revolvers while he whistled softly to himself.

Live or die he proposed to be ready for the promised return of Janrowe, the outlaw.

While the merits and demerits of his hold-up was being so thoroughly discussed three forms were hurrying away toward the Lone Star ranch, the home of the outlaw quartette.

"Wall," remarked Cross Eyed Tim Quentin, "we sartin got in thar."

"Big haul!" said Indian John.

"Yas," replied Janrowe, "'twas pooty good."

Janrowe then directed Indian John to keep well behind and with Injun cunning and craft assure himself that there was no pursuit.

"We mustn't take no chanst thet we are follered," Janrowe said.

Injun John fell back immediately intent on his mission.

This left Cross Eyed Tim and Janrowe riding forward at a long steady lope.

"Ets lucky thet I was fly enough ter hev hosses staked out every ten mile er less, whar it's heavy goin' er we'd never git to no ranch ef we tried ter do this hyar fifty mile ride on one hoss every time."

"Thet's so. It's lucky thet all one hez ter do in this hyar territory is ter find a good grazin' spot, lariat our hoss ter an iron pin en let him eat his fill till we come, en git him."

"Takin' care ter put th' hoss whar the lariat will gin him a chanst ter git drinkin' water," reproachfully added Cross Eyed Tim.

"Wall, et solves the motive power fer us fellers, this-a-way."

"Et shore does!"

The two men rode along in silence for a brief stretch.

"Thar's one thing I don't like, en thet is this hangin' 'round hyar," said Cross Eyed Tim, at length.

"Why not?"

"Et's flyin' inter the face o' things we can't fly under or into."

"No savey."

"Wall, I'll help ye ter savey. Et's this way—wot chanst der any o' us stan' ef we are caught by the Vigilantes?"

"None."

"They'd hang us in t'ree minutes!"

"Lessen that!"

"Now we fellers may git away from the Vigilantes fer quite a spell but seein' ez we are only four an' they's many, we hez gotter git caught some time or 'nother."

Janrowe nodded.

"Wall," he said, "I'm knawin' all o' thet! Say, Cross Eyed Tim, I ain't no tenderfoot. Ef ye hez got cold feet ye kin pull out o' this ez quick ez ye wisht."

"Don't talk fool talk. I ain't agoin' ter pull out. In fac' I'll stick by ye ter the grave itself, but I'm just tellin' ye thet I think ye are in wrong and thar ain't no kinder sense in wot yer doin'—ef I were you I'd call this hyar game er draw one and git fer some other parts o' Breetish Nort' 'Merica—Yar not wanted hyar."

"Wall, I'm comin' ter thet," replied Janrowe. "W'en I makes one er two more good hauls like ther one we gits from thet coach en the one we gits from them chaps in the Coyote Home, an' w'en I shoots-up thet feller Doc Hill, then I'm yourn ter command. Ye kin look

fer me ter gin out o' this hyar territory arter them things is accomplished. D'ye see?"

Cross Eyed Tim "saw" all right; but he refused to be convinced.

"W'y say," cried Tim, "ef ye hez made up yar mind thet settles et, but any minute them Vigilantes are liable ter git ye—don't ye think fer a second thet them fellers ain't arter ye. They might come right out of them bushes et ye now."

These were prophetic words.

From the bushes to the right there rang out the quick blare of a rifle.

How Janrowe escaped no one knows to this day.

The bullet from the rifle clipped his hat from his head and sent it spinning at an angle toward a deep river that ran along the side of the trail here.

The river, mapped as Anderson River, was heavy from recent rains.

It was bankfull and booming and the waters invited one wishing death to enter it; death seemed to lurk in the foam capped waste of the tossing, current of water through which rocks could be seen jutting; and great trees were borne, at lightning speed toward the lower end of the turbid stream as it swept around a high mountain's foot.

The shot from the bushes was followed by the roar of other shots.

"Look out!" shrieked Cross Eyed Tim. "Et's them Vigilantes! We're ambushed, Jubal!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Eric Floyd rode straight from the side of pretty Nellie Liston, to the cabin of Sam Batch.

Whether he had understood the pretty girl's subterfuge or not he did not even confess to himself.

The thing he had understood was that Nellie wished to tell him where the outlaw Jubal Janrowe could be found.

Eric, whose business was that of a fur-trader in a small way, and whose father had left him well off in this world's goods, knew little about the Lone Star ranch. In fact he had not thought that ranches in Mackenzie territory existed at all.

In a land of forest and mountain, wild, unbroken, thinly populated, there had not been much attempt to establish the arts of peace, such as ranches would indicate.

But Eric knew that there would be one thing about the ranch that would be definite and that was its history, if he could get at it. No one was quite as well informed about matters of ranches as was Sam Batch. So naturally, Eric made a bee-line for Sam's home to see if he could get the desired information.

Luckily Sam was at home.

"Hello," he said to Eric's greeting. "What can I do for you?"

"I want information," replied Eric.

"This is where you can get it in large chunks!"

"That being so, what do you know about the Lone Star ranch?"

"Well, not much. I know there's such a ranch some fifty miles from here and that the ranch was owned several years ago by a man from the United States who was anxious to start some kind of cattle business in Mackenzie territory."

"Oh!"

"The ranch was several hundreds of acres at one time, and was made out of part bottom land along the Anderson River, and part of cleared places wrested from the forest, but somehow or other the plan didn't work, and the ranch was given up. The chap that started the plan went West further and that's about all I remember."

"Who's living on the ranch now?"

"No one."

"Sure?"

"N-o. Not dead sure. But I fancy that no one would like to live out there in such an unoccupied spot, for its full fifty miles from anywhere. I suppose the buildings are all tumbled down by this time—"

"No, they are not. They are being used."

"Don't believe it—but why do you say that?"

"I have inside information that they are being occupied."

"By whom?"

"Guess."

"I can't."

"Then I will tell you."

"Go ahead!"

"They are occupied by Jubal Janrowe and his two thug side partners, Cross Eyed Tim Quentin, and Indian John."

Sam Batch took his pipe out and winked in utter amazement.

"I don't believe it," he said.

"It's true."

"Well, if it is it's big news for the Vigilantes. Do you know that they are searching near and far for the outlaws and not a single trace of where they can be found have they gotten?"

"Nonsense! They can't have searched very far or they would have found the men at Lone Star ranch."

"The reason why they didn't find them there was because they didn't search there, eh?"

"I suppose that was it for no one would have thought that Janrowe would have had the nerve to have gone to such a well known place to locate."

"It's the well known places that one is safest in. It's where no one would look that makes one safe, and a man can disappear better in a crowded city than in a country place."

"I guess that's right."

The news variously affected the two men.

Sam Batch was wondering how Eric learned the haunts of the bandits.

Eric was wondering how Nellie Liston learned them.

"It's stranger than fiction," thought Sam, "where all this information comes from—but Eric is pretty square and it looks to me as if he got next in some way, and didn't want any one to know how he got his tip."

"I'd give a four dollar bill up if it could be shown me how Nellie Liston knew where the bandits were lying out," thought Eric. "She didn't impose on me a bit with her funny business about 'spirit control.' She just told me that for reasons of her own—what were those reasons?"

The young man's resolute chin stuck out as he spoke.

"I'm going to know where Nellie got the information, some day very soon," Eric remarked to himself.

Sam Batch broke the silence.

"Well," he said, "it looks to me as if there was 'something doing' for the Vigilantes. I think we all want to get our mud-hooks on Janrowe, but even if we do I'll admit that he is a nervy bandit and carries things with a high hand in these latitudes."

"He has—so far."

"I suppose you have heard that he has held up the bank in the Coyote's Home haven't you?"

"N-o."

"Did it last night?"

Eric burst into a roar of laughter.

"Held up the Coyote's Home with his enemy Doc Hill there?" Eric asked.

"That's what!"

"By thunder, Janrowe is a peach! Who would ever think he had the nerve to dodge into the saloon and hold it up—why there's not a man that frequents the place that isn't a gun-man who is used to shooting at the drop of the hat."

"Well, he did it."

"He's a wonder!"

"Did you ever think that there is another thing to consider about this outlaw, and that is that we Vigilantes haven't got a sure easy thing in catching him."

"I guess yes. How in thunder do you suppose he got wise to where we were holding our meetings?"

"You mean here?"

"Of course."

"I don't know."

"Could any one have peached on us?"

"That's impossible."

"Why?"

"Because the men in the ranks of the Vigilantes don't peach on any one, you know—why we know every man in the ranks!"

"That's so. But how do you suppose Janrowe found out about our meeting place and obtained entrance?"

"I figure it that he followed us to my shack—that is, he followed some one person there, don't you know. Then as we always put on our white masks before we reach the meeting place I fancy he just followed suit and butted in to our meeting."

"But the pass-word?"

"I fancy some one slipped a cog and didn't see him slip by them and so he didn't have to give the pass-word."

Eric thought over the matter for some time. It seemed to him that there was rather of a weak system in the Vigilantes' ranks when a bandit the organization was about to condemn to death slipped in and witnessed his own trial and the determination to lynch him and then had the nerve to pull a gun and declare himself.

"That fellow Janrowe is no ordinary outlaw," Eric summed up. "I think in the penetration to the depths of our secrets, in the holding up and the taking of the faro-bank roll of the Coyote's Home in the face of the gang that frequent it, he made a record that will resound in criminal annals in the North-West for some time—yet, after all, don't you see, Sam, that his downfall is only a question of time?"

"Yep! We'll git him some fine day and hang him up high where wolves can't jump to bite him and where he would not feel their bites if they did."

"That's it! What is there in all this personal bravery, this ingenuity on the part of this outlaw for

himself? If he was an honest man, the two deeds he had pulled over if along honest lines would have made him a hero for life."

"You're right! As an outlaw he can't get anything but death like a felon, and it seems to me too bad that a man of the address of this chap, who can pull over such daring acts, hasn't put his talents to better use than to be an outlaw."

"You might say that of all offenders against law and order. If they would only stop to think there wouldn't be any outlaws anywhere. There's so many ways of directing talents in decent lines than in outlawry—"

"Well, the only thing we have to do is to look out after this chap and hang him so quick that it won't be possible to use his well directed or misdirected talents at all, eh?"

"You're on!"

"What d'ye think we'd better do?"

"Get some of the boys together and start out for the Lone Star ranch. Looks to me as if we could have a hanging bee soon after our arrival there."

"Right oh! How about the wife of Janrowe? What shall we do with her?"

"We certain can't hang a woman, now can we?"

"By hockey no, although between us she deserves hanging quite as much as her husband, Janrowe."

"That's true! Well, the only thing for us to do is to do the best we can and that is hang her husband and the two men we know are his aides."

"You mean Cross Eyed Tim Quentin and Injun John?"

"I do. We will hang the three men and let the woman go—just warn her out of the territory."

"That's the ticket! Now let's go and get the boys."

An hour later the two men, Sam Batch and Eric Floyd, were travelling on the "upper deck of two bronchos."

With them were the seven other members of the Vigilantes, which they had hastily gathered together.

All were well mounted and rode hard.

Thus it was when they had turned a part of the trail that led along the banks of the Anderson River, that they saw coming behind them in the distance, the very three men they were after, Janrowe, Cross Eyed Tim and Indian John.

In two bounds the party was cleanly hidden in some cotton-wood trees along the trail, and there a quick council of war was held.

"It looks like bushwhacking to fire on unsuspecting men, even if they are bandits, from this shelter," grumbled Eric.

"I don't care what it looks like," sneered Sam Batch. "Do you think those chaps would give us the benefit of any scruples like this if our positions were reversed? Don't get woozy! Get to the bandits and stop all this palaver quick as a wink. A few shots and the game is over for them and for us—I'm thinking of the good riddance it will be to the entire hamlet of Dead Mines and the territory at large, if we get the whole bunch at our first shots—look out here they come!"

The outlaws came driving on at speed.

"Fire!" yelled Sam when the thugs were directly opposite.

The weapons of the Vigilantes roared in unison as an echo to the rifle of Sam Batch who shot straight at Jubal Janrowe as he spoke the commanding word.

CHAPTER IX.

A DASH FOR LIFE.

"Look out, boys," yelled Jubal Janrowe, who, gifted with the almost second sight of the outlaw, had almost smelled the fact that he and his party had been ambushed by the Vigilantes before even the word of command to fire had passed Sam Batch's lips.

As Janrowe yelled he ducked the flash of Sam Batch's rifle.

The movement was one merely of self preservation but it won out.

The missile from Sam's gun whistled right over the spot where the outlaw's head had been a moment before.

This saved the outlaw's life.

A born general, he saw in the flash of a second where the only hope of safety lay.

Janrowe cut off from retreat, he saw, by several forms that blocked the narrow trail, with a steep mountain which he could not possibly scale at one side, had only the flooded Anderson River ahead of him.

"Come on, boys," Janrowe yelled. "This way!"

He whirled his horse at the river.

The boiling flood coming higher and higher frightened the mettlesome animal half out of its wits, and it reared and plunged in a mad effort to escape.

Janrowe yelled like an escaped lunatic and dug his spurs into the poor beast's side. It trembled a moment and then under the urging of voice and spur hurled itself into the terrible flood.

Janrowe threw himself from his horse and catching hold of the beast's long flowing tail, half swam and half was dragged directly into the center of the boiling water.

His two companions, Cross Eyed Tim and Indian John, when they saw their leader's desperate action, jumped like a whirlwind upon their horses after him, and pursued the same tactics.

Thus in the twinkling of an eye the swollen stream of water was alive with the fortunes of three outlaws who had each preferred to "take a chance" in the waters to remaining on land to the absolutely certain death that they knew awaited them there.

"By thunder, they are escaping," yelled Sam Batch, when he saw the rash deed.

"Look there! Oh look!" yelled Eric.

They saw Indian John's horse which came behind the other two bandits suddenly stop.

The animal's head went down under water. Then its great body rolled over. It was drowning it was easy to see.

Indian John, who was swimming behind the horse, tried to stem the current himself.

He might as well have tried to swim up-stream in the dreaded whirlpool of Niagara Falls as to breast the Anderson River when it was bank full at flood time.

The Indian for a few strokes seemed to be holding his own.

Then he was lifted by a huge wave.

Its crest bore him upon a half submerged rock.

The bandit's head struck the rock and was crushed in the terrible dash as if it had been an egg shell.

Without a single death-cry Indian John turned over on his back floated for a few feet and then sank to rise no more.

The sight was such an awesome one that the watchers of the tragedy from the bank stood open mouthed gazing at it.

"There's one bandit beyond the vengeance of the Vigilantes," cried Eric as the Indian sank to rise no more.

"I'm glad," replied Sam Batch. "I only wish Janrowe and Cross Eyed Tim were floating down stream alongside of the outlaw in the same manner. It would save us a lot of trouble."

"I suppose it would," replied Eric.

"But don't you see, that after all, the outlaws we need most have escaped? What does a six by four Indian thug amount to dead or alive? He would keep his Injun wits along petty larceny lines if it wasn't for that Janrowe. Or he would, what is worse, be loaded up with whiskey some day, run amuck and get killed quickly, eh?"

"I suppose that is so. But any way we are rid of one of the three men we were after—but look—there they go, the other two most important men!"

As the two leaders of the Vigilantes looked across the stream they saw far away on the opposite bank out of rifle shot, Jubal Janrowe, and Cross Eyed Tim, mounting their horses.

Janrowe as he rode away shook his fist in a derisive manner at Eric.

"He is giving us the laugh," cried Eric in a disgusted tone.

"Surely! There's no question of that," replied Sam Batch. "But don't you know the old saying 'he laughs best who laughs last'?"

"Oh, I know it, but I hate to be balked that way—say, wasn't it a peach that ride down the stony way to the river, and the jumping into the flood, on the part of those three men?"

"You bet! I never say anything better done in my life than that! I wonder at their nerve."

"I don't."

"Why not?"

"Because it was positive death for them to remain where they were, for you know what it would have meant if they had remained."

"They would have waltzed a little while on some thin air, which being rather unsubstantial would have ended in their remaining not quite able to waltz any where after a bit."

Both Eric and Sam laughed at each other when they had spoken.

"It's a sure thing that we won't find the outlaws at Lone Star ranch, I suppose, isn't it?" Sam remarked.

"I guess you are right."

"Is there any use of proceeding there further?"

"I don't think there is—in fact it seems to me it would be poor policy for us to go to the ranch."

"Why not?"

"If we go there and find the wife of this outlaw there we will have to either hang her or drive her out of the territory."

"We can't quite hang a woman no matter how much she may deserve that fate. Out in civilized communities they hang women, or electrocute them. Here, in what is called the wild and woolly part of the frontier, they don't hang, shoot or kill a woman even if they know her to be a female bandit—they just drive her out of the country. If we drive Mrs. Janrowe out, why there's one thing to come back at us, she will get to her husband some word quick of what's happened

and this word will be supplemented by 'keep away from the ranch.'"

"That's true."

"But if we leave her at the ranch the first thing the outlaws will do now is to ride hard for the ranch expecting we are on their trail."

"I see your drift."

"Then when we are not showing up there, they will think after a while—say several days—that our shooting at them was just a happy sort of bit of good luck for us in happening to come across them and not from any definite knowledge that their headquarters are at Lone Star ranch for it's easy to see that the information that they are all living at this ranch is correct."

"That's right! I'm on now!"

"If, therefore, we keep away from the ranch while for a few days the outlaws will be suspicious and will look for us, after that they will decide that we aren't 'wise' to their home and won't jump it, but will use it for a base of supplies as they have done before."

"Then by keeping away you think that you can get the rats to return to their homes, which after a while you can turn into a rat trap."

"That is exactly what I do think. You see, we might chase these outlaws from one end of the territory to the other and they might be only a few hundred feet away from us at any time. You can see how this would come about, can you not?"

"N-o-o."

"The territory is pretty sparsely settled. Now take us all at Dead Mines. One can hold up any one in the town, take a hop-skip-and-a-jump and be into the depths of a great forest where he can lay hidden for ever and a thousand men might hunt for seventeen hundred years and not find the hider who all the time might lay hidden in the next thicket."

"That's true."

"That's what's the matter with the Vigilantes' search for Janrowe. They hunt from one end of nowhere to the other end, don't you know, and unless they had the luck to butt into the outlaws, the way we did last night, they could not possibly find us in the slightest degree, nor could we find them. In this case we were lucky and the other Vigilantes who have been searching for this outlaw crowd unlucky."

The reasoning sounded as if founded on a basis of fact to both men. Eric pondered over what had been said with a broad smile on his face, because to find the arts of a detective about the usual guileless Sam Batch, was something like honesty, often found in unexpected places!

"Well, Sam," Eric remarked, "it seems to me that as the game now stands we need do nothing but go home."

"No place to go but out;
No place to come, but home,
Nothing to eat but food,
Nothing to wear but clothes."

Sam Batch sang these tones in a rough but not uncultivated voice as he turned his steed's head homeward followed by Eric and the other members of the Vigilantes.

"It seems, Sam," said Eric, "that we are having some fun with this outlaw we are after, in the way of a man hunt."

"It also seems that we are having some fun in not being able to get the outlaw, which means that he is

rapidly turning the tables on us and is having fun with us, eh?" replied Sam.

The remark highly amused Eric.

"It does look as if we were like the Irishman who caught the bear by the tail. He said 'it's no thrick t' ketch a bear, but some one must come and help me let go.'"

Sam snickered.

"That's right," he replied. "While we are hunting for this outlaw, Jubal Janrowe, why, he just slides into Dead Mines, holds up a few chaps, and there's then a quick get away by him, and we are left 'holding the bag.'"

"I don't think that's any reflection upon us, don't you know. You see we are handicapped by chasing a man in a wilderness, while the man we are chasing don't have to do anything but put over a plan to avoid us, eh?"

"That's true."

"Well, that will be about all for us for awhile, eh?"

"'Home we g-o-o, home-we go-o,'" sang Sam again, and the party reached Dead Mines without further incident.

By one of those strange interpositions of human thought, the outlaw Janrowe was hurrying homeward at the same time, in much the same way.

"Ef them Vigilantes start ter shoot-up the old woman," snarled Janrowe, "I wanter be thar. I ain't ee goin' ter stan' fer thet, an I'll defend th' old gal ef I git mine while doin' o' it."

"Wall, I kinder think I'm wit' ye. Say, wa'n't thet awful the way John, the Injun, got his?"

"You bet! I tell ye, we aire in Trouble street, all right, oh. I cayant see w'y we ain't. They've got, them Vigilantes, one o' us an' ef we ain't careful they'll git us too—I jest wanter put over one er two more things an' then we will skip."

"Wall, I tink yar plumb foolish! Ef I was you I'd jest quit now on an even break. See? They'll git ye most any time. They may be a shootin' up o' yar ranch neow. Say, quit it Jubal, an' jump fer a high spot."

Jubal Janrowe shook his head.

"Not yit," he sneered. "Ef I knew them Vigilantes would plant me termorrer I'd stay an' try ter get even. I want thet sneaking hound pup Doc Hill an' I want more money fore I quit. Then I'll jump wit' ye."

Cross Eyed Tim shook his head sadly.

He saw it was useless to talk to Janrowe.

In silence the two men, with hardly a thought over the death of their companion bravo Indian John, hurried toward the Lone Star ranch.

To their great relief the ranch was found to be undisturbed.

Skinny Kate met them at the door of their shack-like house and greeted them with unction.

"No, nothing has happened," Kate replied to her husband's anxious interrogative questions. "Things have been very quiet."

Rapidly sketching the attack from the bushes upon his band, Janrowe told Skinny Kate of the death of Indian John.

"Oh, well he was only an Injun; it don't matter much," was the epitaph that Mrs. Janrowe passed upon the dead outlaw.

The couple then talked over the attack at length but each mind forgot immediately the death of their Indian ally; which goes to show that an Indian outlaw isn't

of as much importance as one's horse; for if a horse had died that was a favorite of Mrs. Janrowe her grief would have been excessive.

"Old woman," said Jubal, after a long talk, "I want you to skip this country while you have time."

"Me? Not much! If you stay here so do I. If you get planted so do I," stoutly replied the wife.

"Nonsense! I hope no one will get killed save the Vigilantes," vindictively replied Jubal. "It's necessary for you to go and to take the swag—you know we have some thousands of gold-dust here."

Jubal spoke of the fools-gold that he had taken in the hold-up of the fake Fort Anderson coach.

"You know," he added, "that we must get that stuff to a safe place. My plan is that you and Cross Eyed Tim start tomorrow for Ottawa. There you will wait until I can come to you. You will take all our stuff, the proceeds of our robberies for the past few years, and leaving me enough to get to you on, will be ready to divide it up with Cross Eyed Tim, so far as his share is concerned, and then we will take our share and settle down in peace."

"How about Injun John's bit?"

"Oh, never mind that! He is dead and I'm too busy to hunt up his relatives."

Janrowe laughed with grim irony as he spoke.

For a long while Mrs. Janrowe demurred.

But after a day or two of argument she gave in and one morning early she, and Cross Eyed Tim, started for Ottawa.

It was with relief that the outlaw saw his wife leave.

"By thunder!" Janrowe muttered. "I'm free now to get back to Dead Mines, I have some scores to pay off that are worth paying off. I'm going to make it merry for some of the people I know of before many moons."

Janrowe rode silently away toward the unsuspecting hamlet. No one in Dead Mines had any idea that the outlaw would be able to face the town again, especially as they were all aware the Vigilantes were still scouring the country for Jubal Janrowe the bandit.

CHAPTER X.

JUBAL JANROWE'S TRICK.

The black horse that Janrowe the outlaw rode was known for speed and endurance.

It was a big rangey beast, was Queen Bess, and Janrowe had often said that he would stake his horse against any animal in the territory for any quality a good horse possessed.

It was therefore the distinguishing mark of the bandit, that he rode a black horse and every "black hoss en rider" in the vicinity of Dead Mines was quickly reported to the Vigilantes and many a man had been stopped and questioned because he had the "black hoss" part of Janrowe's equipment.

It was with a grim laugh that Janrowe halted in the bushes and forest depths near the village of Dead Mines, in the early afternoon of the day after his departure from the Lone Star ranch.

It was a beautiful day. The birds sang in the trees, the air was like wine, and the summer soft green lay on every tree and decorated every bush.

Janrowe felt the pleasure of the morning in his

blood, and he lazily stretched himself and felt happy over the future.

"With the old woman and Cross Eyed Tim off with the swag to Ottawa, we are pretty safe to get the coin away from up here. There's enough to make a happy, honest little home with in Ottawa," laughed the bandit. "Well, there's one thing in this world, if you've got the coin no one asks where you got it or how, unless you let 'em see a glimmer that its crooked coin; then the high-brows look shocked and won't play with you. But as long as you keep manner and source of acquirement close—you're all right."

This bit of worldly wise philosophy made the bandit more at ease with himself.

He had prepared a lunch and he soon ate it, taking it from a saddle-bag upon his horse.

Then Janrowe slept.

His horse, lariatied near, ate his fill of sweet bunch-grass, and drank from a tiny brook of crystal water; it was a scene of beauty, sylvan, without doubt charming, and yet behind it all ready to mar it lurked the sinister form of the sleeping outlaw.

The day was passed by horse and man much in the same fashion.

The horse grazed, and drank clear water; the man slept or sat and smoked and dreamed golden fairy tales in which he made money by no labor, save that of raising his great revolver filled with bullets of death.

About five o'clock, Janrowe rose and went to work.

First he cached his provisions and his saddle and blankets near at hand. Then he painstakingly began to *paint his horse white*.

It was remarkable the ease with which he rubbed a preparation of white-wash and paint into the hide of the animal and how it soon began to become a white horse.

Every now and then Janrowe burst into a shriek of laughter at his trick.

Anon as if he was a great artist looking at his progressing work, Janrowe stepped back and viewed the horse with a critical eye.

"While some of that stuff will fall off," he said, "when I painted Queen Bess at the ranch some time ago by way of experiment enough stayed on to make the old gal look like a dirty-white hoss. No one, any way would ever think that I was riding a black hoss any more—no one is hunting for a white hoss and me, although I have every reason to think that there's a lot of people huntin' for me an' me black hoss."

Janrowe laughed and winked again at Queen Bess who had, it must be confessed, a most intelligent look on her face when she heard her master's voice.

Janrowe was soon possessed of a white horse in place of his black one.

The change took away, of course, one of the very marks of identification members of the Vigilantes, who did not know the outlaw, had been given as a means of discovery of the bandit.

Janrowe knew pretty well from his experiences in the past that every road leading into Dead Mines, every trail, every cow-path, was guarded against him now.

The fight had narrowed down where one man, aided by the wilderness of the scene about Dead Mines, had become the focal point for the hundred or more men that made up the Vigilantes.

The odds were slightly in favor of the outlaw.

He had shadows, and forest, mountains, and plains; deeps and heights of vast untilled land, where naught save the wild animal roamed, together with a fine knowledge of the country to aid him; further he had his campaign blocked out in his own mind.

The Vigilantes, many of them, had never been far afield from the hamlet of Dead Mines.

They knew none of the trails that spelled so much to Janrowe; they even had never seen the man they were hunting.

They were handicapped as most of the forces seeking the outlaw are handicapped.

It always is a cause for wonder how the law officers catch the outlaw, because in spite of the numbers arrayed against him, the outlaw has the odds at the end of the game in his own hands.

Janrowe counted on this fact.

He knew that with common precautions on his part he ought to have the best of the battle with the officers representing the law, the Vigilantes, about all the law there happened to be just then in Dead Mines.

"Now then," at last murmured Janrowe, "I'm doing pretty well, thank you, and having changed me hoss, I'll change meself."

From a pack that lay at his feet, Janrowe extracted an ancient saddle.

This he put on poor Queen Bess. A broken bridle tied up with string was put on the horse's head.

Gay caparisons for a horse act a good deal like "gladrags" on a girl.

Queen Bess lowered her ears, and seemed to sink into utter abandonment of her usual dashing style. Even her gait as she trotted about at the end of her twisted-hair lariat, seemed to slink into the horse of a poor man with no past and not much future.

The dashing black steed, filled with frenzy and spirit, ridden by the dark deep bold and bad Jubal Janrowe, was gone.

Instead there was a tame beast, which had not style and did not care to do anything dashing any more.

"Gosh!" cried Janrowe, "Queen Bess, you're the dandy actress. No one would ever think you were anything but a dirty-white mongrel plug."

Wondering if he could do as well, Janrowe donned a pair of blue-jean over-alls. Then he put a dirty red flannel shirt on, shaved off his black-beard and heavy moustache, trimmed his hair close to his head, instead of allowing it to grow so long that it swept his shoulders in true bad-man style, put on a cap instead of his wide felt sombrero—and there was as much change in him as there was in his horse, Queen Bess.

Instead of a bandit, there appeared a tall, heavily built, but not apparently very athletic man, of at least fifty years of age.

The dashing, hard fighting, thug-like bandit air had gone.

Instead there was a meek, rather broken down man with luck far in his past, and who looked like an object of charity.

This once more impresses upon one the necessity of "dressing for life's part."

Next Janrowe loaded on poor Queen Bess a great quantity of tin pots and pans.

All were filched from the larder of Mrs. Janrowe and were in various stages of repair, and need of repair; it was the stock of a peddler of second hand tin-ware; an itinerant mender of old broken down

kitchen utensils; a profession rather well known in the North-West where the cost of common things one buys for a song almost, in civilized communities plus freight charges in Mackenzie territory made the housewife of Dead Mines sit up and gasp when it came time to replace a battered kitchen pail; hence the practice of a peddler going from door to door, and mending the kitchen ware of the housewife for less than it would cost to buy a new dish or pan.

The visible sign of this kind of peddler was always the rattling load of a dozen old-pots, and pans, and these when tied on to Queen Bess made a fine trademark.

Again Janrowe roared when he looked at the horse. "Bess you're a beauty," the outlaw cried as he rubbed his face in mud thus getting on a fine coat of grime.

A green patch for the left eye, a short pipe and his kit of soldering tools was enough to change the bandit into one of the Knights of Peace, instead of a Knight of the Road.

"All ready Bess," now remarked Janrowe as he and the horse started off on the way to Dead Mines.

There was a great rattle of old pots as the beast hustled away toward Dead Mines.

The straight lope of Queen Bess appeared to pass away with the change in her color.

She had a sort of crouching, unemotional gait but which, after all, covered the ground in a surprising manner.

Janrowe's revolvers and knife were hidden under his red shirt but they were there, nevertheless, and his hand stole toward them, when his quick eye caught a lurking form in the shadow of the trees at the right of the trail just at the foot of a trifling hill.

"Halt!" cried this figure as it raised its rifle and took steady sight at Janrowe. "Throw up your hands or I'll blow off the top of your head!"

CHAPTER XI.

NELLIE LISTON HEARS NEWS.

"Well did you find the outlaw?"

When Nellie Liston asked this question of Eric Floyd, the face of the young man fell.

"No-o," he replied in a sulky tone, "we did not."

"Did you see him?"

"We did."

"Did you shoot at him?"

"One of us did."

"Did you hit him?"

"I don't know?"

"Why don't you know?"

"Because he did not remain long enough for me to ascertain, and he has not as yet sent me a letter detailing his condition."

"Do you know that you are really a most exasperating man?"

"Sorry to hear that."

"Having had your fun with me will you kindly do me the extra favor of telling me what you really know?"

Eric Floyd grinned shamelessly in the face of Nellie. It may be that as the two stood rather close together and Nellie's face was an extremely pretty one, that Nellie knew that Eric was prolonging the conversa-

tion, possibly, liking the nearness of Nellie's sweet face, and equally attractive manner.

"Well Nellie, I will tell you all about it," remarked Eric.

"That's a real good boy. Begin!"

Nellie's wonder increased with the news that she received from Eric. He told of the surprise of Janrowe, Cross Eyed Tim Quentin, and of the thug, Indian John; the gallant dash into the flooded Anderson River by the outlaw, his escape and that of Cross Eyed Tim, and the death of Indian John.

"Wonderful!" breathed Nellie, whose eyes were round with wonder.

"Nervy man, that Janrowe," summed up Eric.

"No question of that," rejoined Nellie. "All along I have told you that the outlaw Jubal Janrowe was a man to be reckoned as a man. He has brains and a great deal of bull-dog courage. I tell you, Eric, that the Vigilantes have the time of their lives before them to stop this very bandit. They have got to get him or disband. It won't do for all the outlaws ready-made or in the bud in the shape of callow youths, to feel that the Vigilantes can be fought. Do you understand?"

"I do," rejoined Eric. "I understand perfectly."

Eric added that he could not understand why young men, and boys, or old men entered careers of crime.

"It does not pay," Eric thought, "it can't be made to pay, no matter how easy it looks in the beginning, and no honest lot is half so hard as the life of the dishonest man, yet day by day the ranks of the bandit seem to be filled from the ranks of the dishonest men."

"It beats me," said Eric aloud.

"What does?" asked Nellie.

"The fact that honest men turn dishonest."

"That's a thing that has always been a source of wonder to me. You can understand that first and for all honesty pays better than dishonesty. There's nothing in the dishonest game, but it would be a waste of time for us to say so; some young men never wake up until they are being chased by the Vigilantes the way Jubal Janrowe is."

"That's it!" Jubal will get away for a while. But he is bound to get caught! Don't you think he won't. Sooner or later his career is going to end when his life is snuffed out."

"But don't forget that just now Jubal is giving us a merry, merry hunt, and it is going to take some work to find his thugship."

"That's right! But it's going to be done."

The two did not say much further.

The problem was not an easy one; yet each felt that it would have to be done. The territory had to be purged of Jubal Janrowe and his ilk, the young man knew.

There were some communities where the law of Judge Lynch was the only one possible; the best law possible. In Mackenzie territory, sparsely settled, with few jails, a shadowy sort of government, held in the hands of a few men in the ranks of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, there was not much that could keep down the forces of the outlaw.

The nearest post of the police was several hundred miles away with only a trail-like road leading to the spot, impassable except in summer, and difficult to negotiate then.

So the only thing to do was to protest oneself from a criminal in the hamlet of Dead Mines.

This meant personal prowess, or in case the community was enlisted in the chase of the outlaw, the hanging of the offender by a Vigilance Committee, better known as the Vigilantes.

"Well, Nellie, your tip was all right," Eric remarked. "Yes, it was all right, but how did you know it was at the Lone Star ranch that the bandits lived?"

"Sper-eets," whispered Nellie in a ghostly voice—if ghosts have voices—that at all events brought up a spooky mental picture.

"Spirits?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean to tell me that spirits of the dead gave you the information as to Lone Star ranch?"

Nellie's jolly laugh rang forth.

"If it wasn't the spirits, now Eric, who could have given the information? Since I arrived in town I've never dared to go out much. The entire community is bandit mad. If you go out it's 'Ware the bandit!' If you come in the house it's 'Have you seen the outlaw?' I'm sick of the word! I don't know an outlaw or a bandit if I met one on the Main street of this jig-water town. Do you?"

Eric shook his head.

"I don't know much about outlaws in general but I know something about Jubal Janrowe in particular—and that is that he *did* live in Lone Star ranch and we are going to round him up there some day."

"That's nice! Then the speer-its didn't lie to me!"

"Rats! It wasn't spirits! It was Nellie Liston that put that one up for me."

"Thank you! It was likewise Nellie Liston that raised the speer-its, eh?"

"Foe! Don't give me any of that game of talk! Nellie, you had under those curls of yours some information as to where Jubal Janrowe lived, eh?"

"Curls? I like that! Those aren't curls, they are—but never mind my hair, but let's get down to the outlaw; now how could I know where he was? You can figure it out for yourself that I've not been in this territory only a few weeks and it would not be possible for me to give the information you think I'm possessed of—nonsense, Eric, you're a trifle addled!"

"No, I'm not! I tell you right here that you had some inside knowledge that sent us to Lone Star ranch."

"Nonsense—you run away and get to work at your business whatever it may be. I'm going elsewhere for a ride, bandit or no bandit!"

With these words, Nellie jumped from the front step on the piazza of Mrs. Floyd's home, ran upstairs where Eric saw her wave her hand from the window of her room.

Eric then went to consult with Sam Batch, wondering in his mind whether Nellie was a girl who knew much and wouldn't tell; or knew little and therefore couldn't tell anything.

Meanwhile, Nellie, dressed in a pair of leggins that came to her knees, a knickerbocker suit of tan-whipcord, a wide white-felt hat, a dainty tie in which glittered a diamond, came down from her room and mounted a pinto colored broncho which Eric had secured for her soon after her arrival; a steed with plenty of tricks, but behind them splendid endurance and fire.

Nellie on the horse minced along through the main street of Dead Mines her two revolvers hanging around

her waist in plain sight, and thus marking her as a frontier girl.

Costume, style of riding astride, horse, arms, everything would have made an Eastern or States girl, as the United States was called in British North America, stare in horror.

But in the background of the wonderful forest, in the roughness of the frontier world, Nellie fitted in and was just a common note not jarring on others in the town's octave.

Out of Dead Mines Nellie increased her speed.

When she had loped along for a mile she let a few links out of her pinto broncho and soon was making fast progress.

When whirling on a top of a mountain on the Fort Anderson coach road Nellie saw a man at the foot seated on a rock, while near by his roan horse grazed in abandon.

"There he is," said Nellie to herself, as she pulled in her horse and stopped at the foot of the rock, against which sat Comanche Fred, who had driven Nellie into the town of Dead Mines a few weeks ago on a fake coach trip filled with a fake treasure box, and a fake lot of gold-dust in it.

When Nellie pulled in her horse and looked at Comanche Fred her face wrinkled with smiles.

"What's the matter, Fred?" Nellie asked. "You look like a monument raised to distress. Why don't you sit down?"

There was a strained look of agony in Fred's face.

"Cayant," he muttered.

"Can't," echoed Nellie. "Why not?"

"Bees!"

"Bees? What's bees to do with you?"

"Moren I wisht. Thet's why I'm half a sittin' an' half a lyin' on this hyar rock."

Nellie was wonder-filled by the remark of Comanche Fred but she kept her wonder to herself hoping this way to get a clear view of the woe she saw depicted on the face of Fred.

"Did you get to Lone Star ranch as I told you?" she asked.

"I did!"

"Were the outlaws there?"

"Not at fust."

"Did they come while you were there?"

"Yep."

"All there?"

"No. Only two of 'em."

"Did you know the two that came?"

"Yep."

"Who were they?"

"Head devil and second devil."

"You mean Jubal Janrowe and Cross Eyed Tim Quentin?"

"Them's the chaps."

"They came alone to Lone Star ranch?"

"Did they?"

"Don't you know they did—I mean they came together, but Indian John was not with them?"

"You're right! Them two came alone ter th' ranch, er they came together, I don't care which ye put it—on'y way they was only themselves in thar own comp'ny w'en they reached the ranch."

"Well, what next?"

"Now look hyar, gal, thar wasn't no 'what next' in this hyar case."

"There wasn't?"

"Naw!"

"Why not?"

"Wall, ye must know it sooner or later but I'd planted my hide under some bushes as I thought they was near th' house, and jest as them 'tarnal fellers came, by hokey, I learned thet them bushes was *bee-hives!*"

"Hear the man? Bee-hives!"

"Yep. An' what was wuss the hives had a pretty lively lot o' colonists in ter them—say, I hed ter lay thar an' let them bees sting me fer moren an hour arter them bandits got ter th' ranch! I couldn't move fer fear th' outlaws ud hyar me an there I laid an them bees stung an' stung, an' I didn't dare ter howl—say, Nellie, I'm all et up."

There was an explosion of laughter from the girl.

"Forgive me for laughing," said Nellie at length with tears in her eyes, "but the sight of you half seated and half lying or that rock and your poor swollen hands and face—say, you're funny, but I'm really sorry for you!"

"I like yar compliments an' yar ready sympath-ee, but ef ye please I'll fig'at no more bees. I'd rather fight bandits!"

"I don't blame you."

Poor Comanche Fred smiled at length and taking an easier position went on with his report.

"Wall, I laid out in them bee hives fer quite a spell, an' et length them two critters they sets deoun by an open windy in th' heouse an' they begin' ter talk business. Wall, arter a bit I gits thyar programme."

"Tell me it?"

"Wall, Miss Janrowe an' Cross Eyed Tim are goin' ter git eout o' the territory."

"What? Say that again?"

"They's goin' ter Ottawa."

"When?"

"Started this morning."

"What time?"

"'Bout daylight."

"Hum! Did they take the swag?"

"Yass."

"Where's Jubal Janrowe?"

"He's goin' ter stay hyar till he gits somethin' thet he says was mighty 'ticular done. Then he's goin' ter join hyas wife—say, Nell, they's settin' a lot o' store on the gol'-dust they's gits offen eour coach."

A ghost of a smile simmered over the face of Nellie at these words.

"Do you know the trails about here?" the girl asked finally of the stage-coach driver.

"I sartin' does! I was brung up hyar almost in this vicinity."

"Where's the Ottawa trail?"

"See thet mounting thar?"

As he spoke Comanche Fred pointed to a rangey lot of hills about ten miles across the valley from where they stood.

"Yes. I see it."

"Wall, along the bottom of them mountings runs th' Ottawa trail."

"Oh! Well, where's Lone Star ranch?"

"D'ye see them long hills way over back o' ye ter yar left?"

"That faint hair line of hills?"

"Yass."

"Wall, th' Lone Star ranch is back thar."

"How far is it from the ranch to—say to the Ottawa trail across the valley from us here?"

"About fifteen mile."

"Then Mrs. Janrowe and Cross Eyed Tim, ought to get here by night fall on their way to Ottawa?"

"Yass. Jest erbout. They's hed two hosses and a pack hoss w'en they's left—yass they oughter be along hyar 'bout night-fall ternight. Ye see they ain't in no hurry an' ain't ergoing ter travel fast. Jest gittin' outen danger an' hopin' thet Jubal 'ud run arter them any time 'fore they's got fur."

Nellie nodded.

"Do you know any trail that will lead us across the valley to the Ottawa trail?"

"I don't think ye needs any trail. The goin' cross country is good enough. They's no river in the way. They ain't no quicksand, nothin' by heck, but forest and high ground forest et thet. We ought ter git through it fer thar ain't no underbrush ter think o' hyar—hay, it's a cinch!"

"If we started now we ought to get to the Ottawa trail in time to see Mrs. Janrowe and Cross Eyed Tim go by?"

"Yass."

"I just fancy we will try that little trip," remarked Nellie as she jumped on her horse. "Come on Comanche Fred," the girl cried. "I want to have a heart-talk with the wife of the outlaw, Jubal Janrowe."

Comanche Fred hitched his revolver forward as he swung down the mountain and into the valley on the way to the Ottawa trail.

"Yass, ye kin talk ter that air womern of the bandit ef ye wisht. As fer me I don't talk ter her no moren I would ter a bee."

CHAPTER XII.

THE OUTLAW'S DISCOVERY.

Jubal Janrowe stopped as if he had been shot at the hissing words of command that came from the figure at the side of the trail.

"Sure I will halt," he said in the quavering voice of an old man.

It was a nice bit of acting.

"What d'ye want?" he added trying to peer ahead to see the figure which had trained his weapon on the outlaw.

"Who are you?" the figure cried.

"Me?" asked the bandit.

"Yes, you! You answer pretty quick! I haven't any time for foolin'."

"My name is Tin Pan Pete," cried Janrowe, "most every one knows me fudder up th' river but no one seems ter know me here. Is this a hold-up? I ain't got no money."

The figure peered at the outlaw for some time.

"Oh, a peddler! I see," the man said. "I guess you ain't a bandit, are ye?"

"A what-it?"

"A bandit."

"What's them?"

"The feller Jubal Janrowe I'm watchin' fer is a bandit and I'm waitin' for him to show up with instructions to kill him on sight."

"O-h-h! I know now what you mean. You mean

one o' them pesky varmints of outlaws which infest this part of Mackenzie territory. Say, I know 'em!"

"Wisht I didn't!"

"Why so?"

"It's cold work t' stay hyar waitin' fer this feller. We Vigilantes are bound t' git him some day."

"Git who?"

"Jubal Janrowe."

Janrowe had been edging nearer all the time as he spoke to the guard.

It had been the outlaw's plan to get permission to pass the guard for he now saw that the young man had been stationed where he was to watch for himself.

He also saw that this indicated a cordon of Vigilantes around about the hamlet of Dead Mines all engaged in watching for his advent.

This made the bandit begin to boil inside.

When that process began Janrowe was liable to froth over in any second.

Unfortunately for the young guard the second came from his next question.

"I ain't sayin' what I'd do to Jubal Janrowe," the guard cried, "if Janrowe shows up."

The bandit's temper gave way.

"You coyote you'd run like the sneak you are," roared the bandit, throwing all reserve to the winds and with his pots and pans banging at his side, he rushed at top speed down upon the guard.

Queen Bess forgot her debasement and remembered that she was Jubal Janrowe's famous mare with the noted bandit astride her broad back.

She went at the guard's horse like a wild-cat of the mountains, kicking, biting and neighing as if she was fighting also.

Ten jumps brought Queen Bess alongside of the guard, whose face was pale but who was fumbling for his gun trigger which he had raised to sight at the bandit.

But he had no chance to pull the trigger.

Queen Bess darted at the horse the guard rode.

The two animals came together with terrible impact.

Guard and horse rolled over and over and right into the struggling mass charged Queen Bess.

In the plunging wreck of what had been man and beast a second before the iron hoofs of the bandit's horse went clanging.

Directly upon the form of the guard now struggling to rise dashed the outlaw's animal.

Her fore-foot struck one crashing blow upon the guard's recumbent head and he sank to the earth again, with his skull split open, never to rise again.

Jubal saw in the hurry that the horse of the guard had sustained a broken leg and he stopped and cut the animal's throat to put it out of its misery as it was valueless now, could not be cured, and was better dead than alive.

Here was the strangest part of the outlaw nature.

He cared nothing for the tragic and untimely death of the young Vigilante no more than a stripping boy, and utterly unfit to fight with a seasoned gun-man like Jubal Janrowe.

He cared nothing for taking on a battle that he knew in advance would only end in his favor.

Instead he aided in the killing of a young man in the early flush of life and then aided a horse out of its sufferings. This was because the sufferings of a horse

he understood; but he did not understand that there was any suffering in the crushing of the skull of a man who was trying to arrest him.

Jubal knew, as soon as he had seen the horse the guard bestrode die after a few gasping kicks, that something must be done to stop the passer-by from seeing who the dead man was, and for that matter in seeing the dead man at all.

"I'll fling the corpse into the Anderson River," muttered Janrowe to himself. "Heave yo!"

With the last two words he pulled the body of the guard, whose name he did not know, up behind him on the broad back of Queen Bess.

The short half-mile to the swollen river was soon negotiated and then the body of the unknown man was flung into the river and it soon floated away in ghastly death-stillness.

"I once read," sneered the outlaw, "that every year in the United States of America alone, there will die at the hands of outlaws, and criminals *nine thousand persons*. I don't know how many are to die in British North America in that time but I have increased the death rate by *one* in that infernal Vigilante. Now then, he's gone. Now for his hoss."

As soon as Janrowe returned to the spot where the dead horse lay, he jumped from good Queen Bess and soon tied a lariat around the dead animal which lay in a great pool of its own blood.

With the aid of Queen Bess the dead horse was soon dragged out of sight in the depths of the forest near where the tragedy happened.

Then Janrowe strewed leaves about until all of the traces of the blood of the dead horse was obliterated.

The tracks into the forest were also covered up and to the casual eye no tragedy had happened there.

With a sneer on his lips Janrowe rode in the early night, which by this time had fallen, into the hamlet of Dead Mines.

No interruption came and in the guise of Tin Pan Pete, Janrowe knocked at a door, almost the first one he came to in the village.

"Who's there?" cried a female voice.

"Tin Pan Pete, the tin-peddler."

"What do you want?"

"Want to sell you some pans, if ye haven't got any. To mend your pans if they need mending."

The door opened slowly.

"I don't want any pans but I've got one here to be mended," said the voice of a young rather weak-faced but pretty woman.

"All right," the outlaw replied as he hitched Queen Bess by the usual mode of yanking her bridal reins over her head and leaving them trailing.

While he fixed the pail, a fat child of three years ran about, or tumbled down as it saw fit.

"Yourn?" asked the outlaw indicating the child.

"Yes."

"Where's daddy?" asked Jubal of the child which viewed him in great wonder.

"Da! Da!" was all it could say.

"Oh, he's out with the pesky Vigilantes," said the mother with a shrug of her shoulder.

"Yes?" asked the bandit in one of those ways of speaking which indicated that he would like to know more.

"My husband is a fool to get mixed up in this thing at all," the woman said. "I told him to keep out of it. We never was harmed by this Jubal Janrowe, that

every one in Dead Mines pretty near is hunting for."

"Who's Jubal Janrowe?" the outlaw asked.

"I don't know anything about him, but my husband says he has got to be lynched and that lynching is the only way decent men can protect themselves from the outlaw in this territory where there's not much law or order people, you know," the young matron said.

"Well, I guess from all I hear that this fellow Jubal Janrowe has done enough to earn a lynching sentence. Judge Lynch ought to sentence him for all he has done I should think."

"That's what my husband says. You know that they all say they are going to catch Janrowe in a few hours. My, won't it be fun! I'd like to see him kick."

"So would I," the outlaw remarked as he ran his eye around the room. "Is that a picture of your husband?"

"You mean the one hanging there in the corner?"

"Yes. A man who has such a good looking wife ought to be a good looking fellow."

The woman simpered.

But she brought the picture to Jubal.

The picture was one of those "enlarged from a photograph for one dollar" atrocities that one sees sometimes in this world.

"A good looking fellow," cried Jubal, as he gazed into the painting.

The face that looked back at him was that of the young guard he had seen dying under the plunging hoofs of Queen Bess, and whose body he had flung into the Anderson River not three hours before.

Even crime-stained as he was, Jubal Janrowe felt his heart quiver in his body.

The woman, a widow, yet who did not know her husband was dead; a fatherless child all made by him, and yet after all, Jubal thought, "it was his life or mine for if I hadn't got him he would have got me."

Then there pulsed within him a second thought that the business of a bandit did not pay.

"I'd done better to have stayed honest and then there wouldn't have been any trouble like this for this woman and her kid—I'm sorry now that I didn't stay honest."

This, by the way, is the world wide plaint of the criminal when brought face to face with what crime means to the innocent sufferers, the woman and child.

"What is your name?" asked Jubal Janrowe, the outlaw, whose face now was quite expressionless.

"Michael Leary," said the woman, "that is my husband's name is Michael Leary and he's a nice fellow too. We come from Nova Scotia. My husband works in the Dead Mines Trading Company store here and he is a right likely young man—till he started in the outlaw chasing game. I'm afraid he will get hurted."

Janrowe laughed.

"If he isn't hurt by now," he said, "he isn't hurt very much. That's a likely kid ye have there. What's his name?"

"Michael, sir, named after his father."

Janrowe pulled a diamond ring from his finger. It was worth several thousand dollars, and had not cost Janrowe anything but the danger of holding up its original owner.

"This ring is worth something," he said, "when you get broke take it to any jeweler—it will help you to a pretty neat grub-stake."

With these words the bandit disappeared in the darkness which had by this time settled over the land.

"But you forgot your pay for mending my pan," cried the woman.

"Never mind," the bandit yelled back from the pitchy darkness in which he and good Queen Bess were jogging along. "I'll collect some other time."

As the outlaw jogged along he felt that the diamond would help the widow of the man now dead in the Anderson River to a "grub-stake."

"She's young," he thought. "Women are scarce up here. She'll marry some likely young chap and set up a business on the price of that diamond."

Then Janrowe laughed grimly.

"I wonder," he added to himself, "what's become of the chap I stuck up for that ring? I got it in a hold-up—no, it was in that saloon fight—no, it wasn't—well, I don't know where I got it, or when, but I got it. The chap who owned it originally and gave up cash for it has quit mourning by this time. I put his spark to a good use—but I'm sorry that woman's husband is in the Anderson River! Beats all how that thing sticks in my crop! That kid was a likely kid at that. Wisht I had one like him."

The outlaw after all had some human gleams of heart about him; which is indicative of the fact that he was not all bad.

But when he thought of the cordon of men placed around the hamlet to watch him and to kill him if he appeared anywhere in gun-shot, his face was that of a snarling wild beast and his eyes were mere coals of hatred.

Then when he thought of the Vigilantes scouring the forest and the mountains in search of him, his anger rose higher and higher.

He thus passed the very place he ought not to have passed when his anger was at its height.

This was the fated Coyote's Home, the saloon and gambling resort, owned by Doc Hill.

"Ah," said Janrowe.

From his horse's back he saw the saloon was well filled with men.

Janrowe was on a level with the window. The window was open as was usual and he could hear the babble of voices coming from the inside.

The click of poker and faro-chips came sharply to his ear.

There were two bar-tenders at work in the space behind the bar, serving fiery liquids, for at this hour the saloon was in full blast for it was about ten o'clock at night.

The white-aproned waiters were busy serving drinks at the faro-table to gambling customers.

In his shirt-sleeves dealing the cards for the game was Doc Hill himself.

His was in his shirt-sleeves. Two ivory-handled revolvers peeped from his holsters directly in front of him. An untoward act on the part of one of the guests of his den would be met with an equal warmth as the saloon-keeper's big hands closed over his ready guns.

The face of Janrowe worked strangely as he saw his deadly enemy.

His caution told him to keep away from the vicinity of the Coyote's Home where every man was his enemy; but his hatred for Doc Hill, his intense desire to "git him" over-balanced his caution.

"I'll git Doc right now," said the bandit to himself.

Then with caution Janrowe alighted from the back of Queen Bess.

The trained horse waited until all of the pots and pans were taken from her back; she seemed to know that she was free from the indignity of trade.

Softly Janrowe turned her about until her head pointed straight down the trail toward Lone Star ranch.

The crafty animal stood perfectly still.

She had been trained to await the running jump with which her master would return to her, to then rush away with the speed of the cyclone to save the outlaw's life from pursuing hosts.

The trick had been turned many times before. Would it be turned again?

Then Janrowe looked in the fitful light of the saloon as it streamed through the window, to his two magazine revolvers. He saw they were ready to take his life into their care for on their explosive force, he knew, lay the life of their owner.

Then softly, with the tread of a cat, soft and lurking yet quick, Jubal Janrowe entered the saloon.

He had made two steps when Doc Hill saw him.

Hill's hands rushed to his ivory-handled revolvers while a savage smirk floated over his white lips.

"Yar last hour has come, Doc!" screeched the voice of Jubal Janrowe as he started the rush of bullets flecking from his magazine guns.

CHAPTER XIII.

NELLIE LISTON'S BOLD STAND.

Nellie Liston and Comanche Fred fairly flew over the bottom-land toward the Ottawa trail.

"Ef I was you I'd not set such a pace," called Fred after a couple of miles of fast going. "Our hawses won't stand this pace moren a few miles. This hyar country is purty hard ridin'."

The girl accordingly slackened speed after a time.

"I only want to get there in time," she said.

"Oh shucks! I'll kit ye thar in time. Better take time an' git thar then rush time en not git anywhar."

"That's good logic," laughed Nellie.

But she saw that Comanche Fred was right. It was brought home to her quickly that she would have been lost in the woods through which they were progressing in a few hundred feet from the start if it had not been for Comanche Fred.

In the first place Fred was naturally a woods-man.

He had that wonderful gift of peeping out at the sky now and then and then taking the best route to get to a fixed point.

Hills were skirted to find easier going for the horses, other hills were climbed for the same reason. A detour to get away from a bit of rough road, if a space of a mile might be called a road, where there was nothing but forest on each side, thick and wonderful in its vastness, would be followed by a straight away dash through no timber land where there was nothing but stunted shrubs.

Yet all the while the same unerring instinct sent the two travelers right straight ahead for the Ottawa trail at the point where Comanche Fred announced at the start they were aiming at.

At length Fred halted in a little semi-circle of woods.

The forest shielded them in a green canopy on every side.

There was some grazing land filled with bunch-grass near at hand with a clear little brook at the bottom.

"Hyar we are 'bout a mile from thet thar trail,"

Comanche Fred said. "I vote now that we git a snack t' eat."

"Eat?" said the girl mournfully. "Say, I'd eat boiled dog like the Injuns if I had a dog handy—no, I wouldn't wait to boil him, I'd eat him raw."

"Wall, I've et boiled dog, but never had no raw dog. Boiled dog aint bad a bit, ef yar pretty hongry! I'll admit ye must be *reel* hongry ter eat a dwag!"

"Well, I can't say really whether my stomach would go a dog or not, but I assure you that I'm nearly starved."

"How'd a canned co'n beef san'wich en a pickle go?" asked Fred as he fumbled in his saddle-bags.

"Don't speak about it! It's cruel! I know I can't have any such thing but of course I'd like corned-beef sandwiches and a pickle—oh, my!"

Comanche Fred grinned as he handed the girl a nice little pack of sandwiches with a tiny paper of pickles on top.

"Geel!" was all she could say.

But her moving lips showed what was the fate of the top sandwich and the uppermost pickle.

"I hate to talk with my mouth full," she said, "but, you pearl of a man, where did you get the sandwiches?"

Comanche Fred grinned again.

"Let me tell you my dear," he said in a patronizing tone, "that I've chased bandits be-fore! Oncet I chased a feller half over Keewatin territory on an emp-tee stomach. En I sez then 'never again!' I go abandit-huntin' th' way a good general goes ter battle; that is, wit' a good commissary department wit' him. So when ye sent me ter spy erbout them outlaws, do ye know th' fust crack I did was ter pick out hash fer th' campaign. Say, I've got plenty o' food, in the way o' san'wiches, co'n beef, pickles, en cold stuff, but, by hokey, wot would I not give fer a cup o' hot coffee?"

Fred smacked his lips as he spoke.

Lying out in the bushes watching Lone star ranch outlaws with nothing but cold things to eat made coffee hot, boiling hot, stir Comanche Fred to where he lived!

"Well, as for me," rejoined Nellie, "this is a pretty nifty lunch!"

She ate two or three more sandwiches, topped off girl like, on a desert of pickles *a la* cold, and sour, and then after getting a drink of delicious spring water, she turned again to Fred with a bright smile of content.

"What do you do up here when any one saves a whaler?" she asked.

"Huh?" repeated Fred.

"I mean in Hudson Bay, when a whaler comes along what do you do?"

"I dunno. Let him whale I suppose!"

"No, I don't mean that! I mean when a whaler is in distress what do you do?"

"Me? Oh, I don't do nothin'! I sit on the bank and watch th' other fellows. I ain't no seaman, Miss, naw notter bit o' one!"

"What do the 'other fellows' get for saving the crew and the cargo and the ship?"

"The insurance companies that has insured the ship pay salvage ter the fellers wot figured in th' deal."

"Well, I owe you salvage—thank you now for letting me tell this joke. I thought you'd block the joke; you did twice in the past ten minutes."

"Why I never seen no joke, gal. Say, you mustn't ask me ter see a joke. I'm a High Brow by profession. They can't see no joke, not even can they see how funny they is with thea-tres that they can't git ter pay, an' books that no one reads, no, not themselves,

an' papers run in their in-trust wot nobody never sees—say, don't make me laugh!"

Nellie did laugh merrily, however.

"After all I think you're a humorist," she said.

"I ain't never been indicted fer it ef I am," snapped Comanche Fred and as Nellie was able to judge that this time Fred was not joking she wisely dropped her joke, although she still warmly insisted that he had saved her from starvation by his corn-beef sandwiches and pickles.

Nellie then drifted into the reason for her visit to the Ottawa trail.

"I sent you out here to spy on the Lone Star ranch and its bandit brood," the girl said, "because in my mind just what has happened was going to happen."

"Huh," replied Fred. "I see!"

"Now we have got to turn bandits ourselves."

Comanche Fred opened his eyes.

"Huh!" he remarked.

"I mean by this that we will have to hold-up Mrs. Janrowe and Cross Eyed Tim with all the speed we can when they get by us here."

Fred shook his head.

"That's a pretty dangerous thing to do! Them outlaws ain't no kids thet git scared o' a gun ef ye pint it at 'em. They's goin' ter fight ye hard. My advice ter ye is thet w'en ye hears them comin' we both o' us gits outen ter whar they are comin' by, then w'en they gits oppersite ter us we jumps out in thar own style wit' the 'han's up' and de guns ready."

"But suppose they don't hold their hands up?" asked Nellie.

"Bang! Bang! Two dead outlaws," replied Comanche Fred with a matter of fact air.

"Would you shoot a *woman*?" the girl cried her eyes wide with amazement.

"Shore! I'd shoot a baby ef its han's wa'n't thrown up w'en I says 'Han's up,' fer mind ye, I don't never say thet thar two woids unless I *mean* it. I don't pull no gun ner train no gun on man er woman or child less I *mean* ter use th' gun jest as damquick ez I kin. I ain't one o' them fellers wot says 'Han's up' an' then sticks a gun out and don't *use* it. Gal, never pull a gun on any one 'cept ye has ter! Remember thet! Thar ain't no ust in using a gun ninety-nine times outen a hundred in any de-sturbance one may git inter. But in the one thet ye need ter pull a gun, pull it damquick, and *use* it, gal, jest as hard and long as she'll explode her cartridges. W'y, say, this hyar territory is filled wit' graves o' them w'at pulled a gun an' then didn't hev no sand ter use et."

Nellie nodded.

There was a whole sermon in the right way to use a gun in what the good Comanche Fred said, and there was no better expert in all the North-West than he when it came to gun-play.

"Well, then, we will decide that the best thing for us to do is to hold-up the outlaws."

Highly amused Comanche Fred replied in the affirmative.

To him there was something that was wonderful in its quaint humor about a plan to hold-up an outlaw's wife, as notorious as was Mrs. Janrowe, and the confidential man of her husband's bandit choice, Cross Eyed Tim.

The scheme was delicious and appealed to the North-Western manner and heart of Comanche Fred as soon as Nellie proposed it.

"It's a peach of a scheme!" cried Fred several times. "But w'en ye has yer game held up, wot ye goin' ter do?"

"I want every dollar they have on them, all the plunder the pack-mule they have with them is carrying. All save, the fool-gold and enough to pay the expenses of Mrs. Janrowe out of the territory."

"Gosh! How much do you allow will fix her eout?"

"Two hundred and fifty dollars will see her into Ottawa. That's enough cash. She can go to work there and earn enough cash to support her. She has been living by dishonest means so long that I think I will give her a chance to live by honest methods."

"That's all right," cynically answered Comanche Fred, "if you let her win by such methods. But she won't earn her livin' thet away, havin' got it easy crookedly."

"The facts as you put them are probably so, but I'm going to give her a chanst, as you call it. I can't aid in the execution of any woman. Rest assured of that, Fred."

"Naw. Nor kin any feller in the No'th-West. We ain't civilized thet far yit. Ef a woman does wrong up hyar why we jest run her eout o' th' country, an' let it go at thet. Killin' a woman ain't our salt. Your bandit in th' cities is th' only one thet kills a woman."

Nellie, whose experience was not wide, smiled assent for she had read this fact in a book that summarized the outlaw situation thoroughly.

"Well," the girl added, "I'm sorry we have to take action in this matter, but I suppose we must."

"Are ye goin' ter take away thet 'fools-gold' from Mrs. Janrowe?"

"By no means! I intend to let her have everything she has on her packmule save the ready money, jewels, and things of that kind, that have been *stolen* from this territory and its people by her husband. Then I am going to try and return all of the stolen things I can, and turn the stuff I can find no owner for to the Canadian government."

"Phew! You're honest!"

"I'll be well paid by the Fort Anderson Stage Company for what I do in aiding the outlaws to get 'theirs.' The breaking up of the gang will be worth good money to the company. You won't be forgotten in the payments, of course, and I guess we will have more money than we ever had in our lives before, with the sweet feeling that it's 'honest money' earned by our own labor and brains and we can spend it as we choose, or save it without any one's asking us where we got it. That's the beauty of honesty!"

"Wall, I guess yer right. I allus wanted ter be a bandit, but shucks, it never seemed ter me thet them fellers was doin' much better then I was a stage-coachin'. So I passed up thet game an' stuck ter the honesty racket!"

Nellie giggled.

She started to speak but before she did so there came on the wind the faint sound of a tramping party.

"Hosses!" cried Comanche Fred. "Git ready thar Nellie! Hyar comes Cross Eyed Tim, and th' female outlaw, Mrs. Jubal Janrowe!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SHOOT-UP OF THE COYOTE'S HOME.

With the first shot that came from Jubal Janrowe's revolver, Doc Hill, owner of the Coyote's Home, the notorious gun-men's gambling resort in Dead Mines, sighed gently and sank down in his chair.

The outlaw feud was over!

Doc Hill had been shot through the brain and instantly killed.

Never was there anything more instantaneous than this death.

The bullet from Jubal Janrowe's heavy-caliber revolver had struck Doc Hill directly between the eyes.

Its entrance was shown by a clean round hole, the edges painted in the crimson blood of the saloon owner.

So quick had death come that Doc hardly moved; he had just slid a trifle down in his chair, one hand grasping the handle of his revolver, which it was seen that he firmly clutched.

"He seen Janrowe," whispered Warty Collins, who was playing faro at the table. "He tried ter draw on him, but Jubal hed the drop on Doc an gin it ter him 'fore Doc cud draw his weepin'."

With the firing of the shot Doc's friends seemed to have been frozen into statues of gambling and drinking men.

Not a hand stirred toward a weapon.

Jubal, quicker than thought even, had left the place and rushed to good Queen Bess.

He made a mighty jump and the hoofs of the gallant animal showered the street with dirt, and when a stone was struck in the terrific flight, the sparks alone showed the fast flying feet of the doughty horse, all else was mere shadowy bulk of something rushing away like a great cyclone.

"Hurry, Bess!" hissed Jubal.

This was the outlaw's wording to his horse when he meant extra endeavor and when the animal heard the sound of the quiet words, she seemed to become a horse possessed.

Her leaping bounds carried her master far away from the scene of his terrible deed in a masterly way.

Jubal Janrowe had wreaked vengeance upon his enemy, and now there was but one thing more to do, and that was his crowning coup, before he had made his escape for the projected journey to Ottawa to meet his wife.

"Things have been going my way," he thought. "I've escaped the Vigilantes so far and I've got a tidy fortune on its way to Ottawa. No danger of the old gal's being held up on the way there. No one in the ranks of the Vigilantes knows the stuff is gettin' out of this territory to Ottawa, an' I'm all right fer in the gold alone we got in dust off the Fort Anderson coach is *sixty-one thousand dollars!* After we pay off Cross Eyed Tim, we have enough to live on comfortably from that alone. Later we can divide up the rest of the swag. My, there's good livin' for us all in what the old woman has on her pack mule."

Then without a word further, after riding at his horse's best speed for four or five miles, Jubal returned to the spot where he had cached his goods prior to the ruse he had adopted of going to Dead Mines in disguise.

Soon he was afield again this time dressed in his usual garb, but without the heavy black beard he had usually worn, but in the case of Jubal the shaving off of his beard did not change him much; he was still the swarthy black-browed bandit.

As soon as he had breakfasted the next morning after he had left the spot where he cached his goods, Jubal rode fast to the fringe of mountains that were to be seen far away on the horizon.

There, Jubal knew, was situated one spot that was making money for its owner.

It was a concern known as the Mackenzie and Toronto Timber Corporation, Limited.

It employed some five hundred men and Jubal knew that these men were all high class labor.

"The pay roll of the corporation must be easily ten thousand dollars a month. Then there's other bills to be met and I'll bet that the safe of the company has always some twenty-five thousand dollars in it," thought Jubal. "Now if I can get over there and get to that safe, with that money and what I have got in the old woman's care, I've got enough to last us all our lives. We won't have to do any more work. We can make our sneak feeling that we hev trimmed Mackenzie territory going and coming. We certain hez got all that has been in sight."

Jubal laughed grimly to himself.

He took from his pocket as he loped along a little bottle carefully done up in many rolls of cotton.

"Soup," Jubal said. "Good old nitro-glycerin! It will blow open a safe in a short time—well, it's pretty good luck fer me that I happened to have the soup or I would never get into that safe."

Jubal looked at his watch.

"Too early," he remarked to himself. "I'd better go slow. I don't want to do no more holding-up if I can help it. I want this to be an easy night job. I've killed my last man."

By and by Jubal was near the fringe of mountains where the higher and better grades of timber began to rise,

In the foreground was a cluster of tiny huts, and back of the huts was a saw-mill, in which the big trees were turned into logs to be made into rafts, thence to be floated down into the Lake of the Woods, where it was later turned into good boards for the building operations in the North-West.

"Hully gee!" remarked Jubal. "Was there ever such luck? The shack where the safe is located is way up on those hills! I'm safe t' git away with the boodle tonight."

But there was a lot of time yet to be passed before night fall.

So Jubal swung around to the right of the place which was named Timbertown, and struck toward the bottom-land, where in a shady, good grazing spot he staked out his good horse, Queen Bess, and then went to sleep, breathing like an infant, and not in the slightest manner disturbed by dreams of his wild career.

Here he was alone, pursued by outlaws, now, in the friends of Doc Hill, who would avenge the saloon-keeper's assassination if they could, for the shooting of Hill was really assassination pure and simple, in that he had no show at all for his life.

Jubal also was being pursued by the Vigilantes who knew that every day he was at large enlisted in his ranks, at least by imitation, others who were kept out by the fear of the dreaded lynching party, the Vigilantes, whom Jubal now was making a mock and by-word of—yet, the outlaw slept calmly, not appearing to fear forces that would make any ordinary man quake with dread.

Night had fallen when Jubal awoke.

His mare stood near.

She was as sleek as a day of rest and good food could give her.

"Good Queen Bess," cried Jubal, as he cleaned the animal with wisps of grass. "You're going to have one more hard run—and then for liberty for life! No man but Jubal Janrowe will ever ride you, gal. I'm going to have you carry me back to civilization and then I'm going t' turn you loose for the rest of your life where you won't have to do no more work."

The animal seemed to know what Jubal said.

She whinnied and rubbed her head up and down her master's coat.

"In about three hours more, we will be ready to do business with the safe," added Jubal. "You might as well enjoy yourself till the time comes."

The outlaw then began preparing his supper.

From his saddle bags he took a tiny frying pan, and some flour, baking powder, and a trifle of lard in a little can.

A collapsible coffee pot, and a tiny can of butter, soon was spread out on a wide stone.

Then Jubal got together a mere handful of dry sticks, and grass.

This tiny pile he lighted and by one of those woodman's niceties of work, managed to boil his coffee, and cook a flap-jack over the fire in a trice without any betraying smoke going up in the air to tell any one that some one was encamped in that direction. Such news might lead to complications for every one seemed to know that there was a hue and cry in the air for Jubal Janrowe the bandit.

"Well, if they don't git me by morning they never will git me," muttered Jubal to himself. "This is my last cast. I ain't goin' ter stay in this business any more. I'm through when I've cracked this safe and got out its wad."

When midnight came Jubal on his brave mare's back had negotiated the distance between his camp and the log-cabin on the mountain side where the safe of the Timber Company was situated.

The spot was a wild one.

The cabin was made of logs roughly placed together and which had been filled in with a rough plaster made of common earth, mixed with water, and which in the hot summer sun of the territory had baked to a mortar or concrete like substance.

This made the cabin strong and tight as the logs were merely great felled trees roughly modeled out so that they could be moulded into the form of a cabin.

The cabin was built right in a sort of hollow where the mountain seemed to hesitate before taking its final skyward leap.

The timber had been cleared off around the cabin for a few hundred feet but the blackened stumps of the trees seemed to be men sentinel-like watching the scene as Jubal Janrowe rode up.

Jubal managed to ride directly to one side of the cabin and after fixing old Queen Bess with her head pointed down the trail along which he expected to escape, Jubal hitched her in the customary North-West manner, and he then was to be seen softly making an inspection of the cabin to be sure that there was no watchman about.

It was evident from his first glance that there was no one in authority in the Timber Company that in any way feared Jubal's attack on their property.

In the first place the cabin was so far away from Dead Mines, the risk of an attempt to break into the massive steel safe without awakening any one seemed to be too great to be taken, and the Timber people lived in fancied security, not even dreaming that any bandit would have the dash and address necessary to crack the safe which at this time held not far from twenty thousand dollars.

"No one here!" muttered Jubal after a long inspection.

He strode to a window as soon as he felt sure that no one had been set to watch the safe.

From his pocket there flashed a burglar's jimmy; in a second the jimmy forced open the catch to the window and Jubal quietly dropped into the office within.

There were the same kind of desks and chairs, typewriters, tables, and in fact all the things that go to make up the usual office furniture of a successful company.

Jubal's electric pocket-lantern told him this as he flashed its tiny circle of light hither and thither.

Jubal then extracted from the pocket of his coat a bit and a steel drill of wondrous temper and penetrating power.

Soon he had drilled a tiny hole deep into the chilled steel outer-sheath of the big safe, just where the combination knob protruded.

Then Jubal bored a second hole directly underneath the first one and at the end of an hour had a circle of tiny holes about the knob of the safe's combination mechanism.

"Thar," sneered Jubal at length. "Thar's a good job! They say that there's being made a safe that a burglar can't bore into—well, I'd like to see the one I can not bore into? If it's on earth I'd like to see it! Any way, this here one isn't it."

Having bored the circle of tiny holes, Jubal took from his pocket his little bottle of "soup," as most safe-crackers call the nitro-glycerin, that powerful explosive they use in breaking into receptacles for valuables.

With the long quill of the goose, Jubal carefully and quietly blew the holes full of the deadly explosive.

It was an hour's steady labor.

Drop by drop was each tiny hole filled. The holes in themselves would not hold much but the deadly stuff trickled down about the inner mechanism of the safe, especially where the combination that governed the lock lay.

"That will fill her insides full of dope," scoffed the outlaw. "She has got a good charge of stuff layin' about th' lock now. When I set off the soup it'll jar them bolts back, and presto—I'm gettin' the cash!"

Jubal chuckled as he spoke.

He took from his pocket a tiny battery and attached the electric spark making thing to one of the tiny holes by what is called "soup-nippers."

Then he took a position as far away from the safe as he could get.

He touched the button on his battery.

There was a startling, muffled explosion immediately.

But it was not a loud sound.

No one fifty feet away would have heard it, save thinking it was the slamming of a large door.

As the sleeping workmen and officials of the Timber Company were more than a mile further down the mountain side, not a sound of the blowing open of the safe reached them.

"Well, that was pulled over pretty slick?" questioned Jubal to himself as he walked over to the safe.

The "soup" had done its work.

The great steel-doors lay flat on the floor.

The bolts and lock of the safe were mere bits of twisted steel and broken bits of metal.

The inner sets of drawers in the safe could be seen now, confined only with little locks.

"A two months' old kid could git t' the cash now," cried Jubal to himself as he whipped out his jimmy and opened a drawer.

"Good Lordy!" Jubal almost howled. "Look at them bills—yellow boys most all—my, thar's thousands an' thousands there and all mine!"

The glee on the bandit's face at his success was excessive.

Then he opened another drawer in the same manner. "Great Scots!" he almost yelled. "Gold coins—my, my, what a find! My last strike fer wealth hez got all the rest of my deeds stopped in a whisper—what's that?"

Jubal was frozen by a shrill whistle that rang in his ears.

"What's that?" Jubal whispered again, his black eyes roving from side to side.

Again the whistle sounded.

Jubal stole on tip-toes to the window of the cabin.

Dark forms were stealing about making shapes and shadows of intense bulky meaning to the outlaw's eyes.

"The Vigilantes!" cried Jubal, driven out of his self-possession when he saw that the cabin was surrounded.

"Yes," cried a voice outside. "You're trapped!"

"Not yet!" shouted back Jubal.

His eyes were stern in purpose.

His hands clutched his revolvers.

He stole toward the window bound to sell his life as dearly as he could for the realization had come to him that no possible escape lay before him.

"Come out and meet your fate like a man," howled the Vigilante leader.

Jubal straightened out his tall form.

There was only one thing possible now.

That was a running jump from the window and a bold run to Queen Bess and a tremendous rush down the steep trail in hopes of an escape; a faint hope at best.

Jubal turned to the broken safe, and saw in the half light the dimly and dully gleaming gold.

"Curse ye!" he howled. "If I'd not tried t' git ye tonight I'd been safe with my old woman at Ot-tawa!"

No fiend in the under-world bore an expression of despair greater than the one now appearing on the face of the outlaw.

Taking a long breath Jubal darted through the window.

There was a roar as he struck the ground that sounded like the explosion of a ton of dynamite in his ears.

There were at least fifty men in the Vigilantes' party pouring shot at the outlaw.

Jubal Janrowe was shot ten times in the first blare of the blazing weapons.

Yet he seemed to bear a charmed life.

Not a bullet reached its vital mark.

Jubal's two revolvers were sighing and singing their message of death at the same time that his enemies were firing.

A Vigilante pitched over on his side at Jubal's first shot, dead, with a bullet in his heart.

Three others were wounded, one fatally, but like a man whose life is guarded by some occult force the outlaw staggered to Queen Bess, and gave a wild yell as he vaulted upon her back.

"Safe, ye hounds!" roared the outlaw.

Queen Bess dashed forward as of yore intent on saving the life of her master in a magnificent burst of speed.

It looked as if the outlaw would escape after all. But Eric Floyd jumped into the breach. He drew a bead on the flying bandit. His rifle cracked.

Jubal Janrowe shivered in his saddle.

He fell limp upon the neck of Queen Bess, who whirled away with the dead body of her master, off and away to the freedom of the wide wild North-West. Jubal had spoken well.

No man than he ever bestrode the gallant beast again.

Queen Bess and her dead outlaw master vanished that night like a ghost of a horse and dead man into the unfathomable secrets of the wilderness; for neither living horse or dead bandit were ever seen again.

CHAPTER XV.

NELLIE LISTON'S BRAVE SHOT.

Of the Janrowe bandits there now remained but two persons; Cross Eyed Tim and the wife, or rather now the widow, of Jubal, the outlaw.

These two were now bearing down upon Nellie Liston, the brave girl detective of the Fort Anderson Coach Company, and Comanche Fred, the gallant stage-coach driver, who were secreted along in the underbrush that crept out at the Ottawa trail.

"Thar they are! Git busy now!" counseled Fred in a whisper to Nellie.

With nerve like steel the girl darted from the bushes. Behind her strode Comanche Fred.

"Hands up!" Nellie cried.

Cross Eyed Tim Quentin snarled like an ugly wolf, his face distorted by hate.

He jerked a revolver from his belt and in one more second would have shot Nellie.

But the girl's face did not change its expression.

She pressed the trigger of her weapon.

A stream of light and a swift explosion followed.

Cross Eyed Tim curled up, swayed back and forward in his saddle and then pitched forward head down dead.

The last of the male bandits of the Jubal Janrowe party lay dead face downward in the sandy soil of the Ottawa trail.

Mrs. Janrowe was used to deeds of blood.

Her finer sense had seen that she was not able to cope with the man and girl who had so unexpectedly held them up.

Her hands were in the air, so Comanche Fred who had trained his weapon on her, while Nellie attended to Cross Eyed Tim, but understanding in advance refrained from shooting Mrs. Janrowe, although he had no chivalric motives in not doing so.

"She didn't gin' me no chanst ter kill her," Comanche afterward explained to Nellie.

"Get off that horse," Nellie commanded, as soon as she felt sure that Cross Eyed Tim was dead.

Mrs. Janrowe still with her hands in the air did as she was bid.

"Get over to that rock and set down," cried Nellie.

With unconscious humor that made Comanche Fred stare, the girl was reproducing the scene of the hold-up of the Fort Anderson coach in White Pass in which Nellie had so largely figured.

Mrs. Janrowe knew better than to disobey.

"Tie her hands," cried Nellie to Fred. "When that is done pull the body of Cross Eyed Tim out into those woods and before we leave we must bury him. I had not intended to kill him, but I had to when he started to get his gun."

"Wall, arter all, thar wa'n't much place fer him in this hyar world. Th' days when th' outlaw kin exist even on th' fron-teers, Nellie, is rapidly coming ter a close."

The two, man and girl, then made careful search of Mrs. Janrowe's pack-mule and person.

About ten thousand dollars in money and a great quantity of diamonds, set and unset, and watches, bracelets, and rings, was taken from the woman.

"Skinny Kate Janrowe," cried Nellie at length. "Here's two hundred and fifty dollars for you to get to Ottawa on. Now get!"

The old woman had not said one word during the entire hold-up.

She got on her horse and rode away without a word, hugging to herself the fact that she still held the fools-gold in her possession.

What her feelings were when she discovered that the gold was bogus and worthless, and then sensed the plot Nellie had "put over" need not be described here.

As soon as the woman had disappeared down the trail, sitting erect on her steed and leading the pack-mule, trotting away as if nothing had happened, Nellie aided in the burial of Cross eyed Tim and then she and Comanche Fred hurried back to Dead Mines.

Eric Floyd met Nellie the first thing.

"Jubal is dead," he cried. "*The Vigilantes' Revenge* has been taken on the body of Jubal Janrowe, the outlaw!"

Nellie in turn told Eric of the hold-up in which she had figured and made his eyes open and his breath came quickly.

"How did you trace Jubal to the Timbertown safe?" asked Nellie.

"I think it was I that thought it a good plan to get some of the boys together," replied Eric, "and then rush out there on a flyer."

Nellie told of her employment as a detective by the Fort Anderson coach line.

Eric laughed.

"We might make up a life partnership, you know, in the detective business since I seem to have the detective sense in directing by intuition where to find a criminal such as Jubal Janrowe was. What do you think of the plan, Nellie?" Eric said.

"Well, when we have distributed the Jubal Janrowe loot to its rightful owners," the pretty girl replied, "and have reaped our reward in cash from the stage-coach company, I'll think about it."

"The only thing that we will find, I fear, is that we have stamped out the Jubal Janrowe bandit gang of three men and one woman so thoroughly that the new detective firm will not have any business to take up," put in Eric.

"As long as the world lasts," replied Nellie, "there will be fools that will drop a decent life to become bandits and outlaws and as long as they do there will be law and order men and women like us, ready to put them where the Janrowe gang has gone."

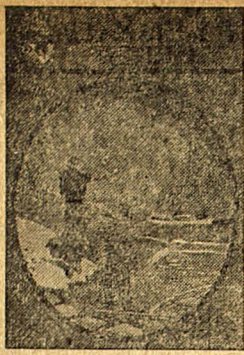
Eric Nodded.

THE END.

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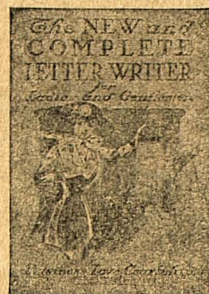
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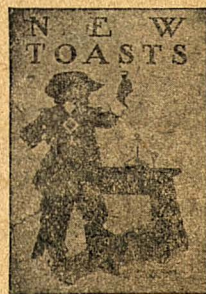
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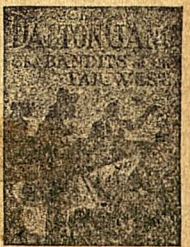
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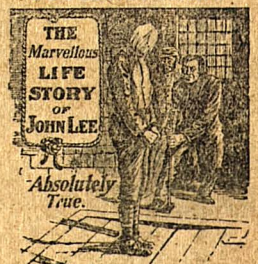
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March 9—No. 15. THE TREASURES OF MACKENZIE ISLES.....or The Outlaw's Drag-Net
March 16—No. 16. HELD UP AT SNAKE BASIN.....or The Renegade's Death-Vote
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March 30—No. 18. THE RED MASSACRE.....or The Hold-Up Men of Barren Lands
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