SEVEN WONDER-STORIES OF THE WORLD—WITHIN!

The RANGER

EVERY SATURDAY.

2d

No. 15.—Week Ending May 23rd, 1931.

The OUTLAW KID!

Hoss-sense saves the Rio Kid from a high dive into eternity—and the hoss-sense comes from his mustang.

BREATHLESS?—SURE! THRILLING?—YOU BET! YOU'LL CATCH YOUR BREATH AS YOU READ THIS QUICK-FIRE WESTERN YARN!

In the Night!

THE Rio Kid woke suddenly.

He had been dreaming of wild old days on the outlaw trail as he lay in his bunk in the foreman's cabin on the Bar-T ranch. Outlaw days were over for the Kid now, though they haunted his dreams. In the busy days on the ranch the new foreman of the Bar-T had almost forgotten that he had ever been the outlaw of the Rio Grande.

But "Santa Fe Smith," foreman of the Bar-T, had not forgotten the wary caution and vigilance that had been second nature with the Rio Kid. His eyes opened in the darkness, and his ears were intent the instant he had awakened. The next moment, as a faint creak came from the window shutter, he knew what had awakened him.

The Kid sat up and reached for one of the walnut-butted guns that lay by his bedside. His eyes glinted in the gloom. They were fixed on the wooden shutter that covered the unglazed window, through a chink or two of which came a glimmer of the soft starlight of Texas. The shutter creaked again and again, under a pressure from without; slight sounds that would have disturbed few sleepers. A grim smile flitted over the Kid's face in the gloom, and he slipped quietly from his bunk.

The shutter creaked again and slid open. A shaft of starlight glimmered into the cabin. The Kid, standing back against the wall in deep shadow, gripped the butt of his Colt and waited. It was easy for a man to step in at the window, now that it was open, and the Kid waited for him to step.

The shutter slid wide open. In the square of starlight a dark figure blocked the stars. But the midnight prowler did not enter. An arm was thrust into the opening and a revolver glimmered. It was aimed directly at the bunk across the room.

The Kid waited, tensely.

For a long minute the revolver remained at a level, but the trigger was not pulled. The man was watching, listening. But the dead silence reassured him. Suddenly, with an effect of thunder in the silence, came the roar of the six-gun.

Bang!

The bullet smashed into the bunk where a few minutes before the Kid had been sleeping. Bang, bang, came fast and furious; bang again, and again. The man at the window was emptying his six-gun into the bunk—riddling the man who lay there with bullets, as he figured. And the Kid, grimly silent, waited till the six shots had crashed out, splintering the bunk and tearing through the blankets. The cabin reeked with smoke and the smell of gunpowder. A husky, savage voice followed the rapid shooting.

"I guess you've got yours, Santa Fe Smith, doggone you!"

From the distance came a shout. The roar of the Colt had awakened the punchers in the bunkhouse. The black figure at the cabin window backed and the starlight streamed in. And the Rio Kid, with a light leap, sprang through the window.

The man who had fired was running for the gate. But he spun round with a gasping curse as he heard the Kid behind him. The black-bearded face of Alex Black, late foreman of the Bar-T, who had been sacked for rustling, glimmered in the starlight. His eyes almost started from his head as he saw the Kid—the Kid whom he believed to be lying in the foreman's bunk riddled with bullets.

The Kid's eyes gleamed at him over a lifted gun.

"Put 'em up!" rapped the Kid.

The empty Colt was gripped in Black Alec's hand. His arm came up and the empty Colt whizzed at the Kid. The Kid caught it on the barrel of his own weapon, and struck it aside. As he did so, Black Alec ran for the gate again, with the desperate speed of a hunted wolf.

Bang!

The Kid fired and the bullet grazed the running man. The Kid could not bring himself to drive lead through the back of a fleeing enemy. With a fierce leap Black Alec was over the gate, and dragging loose a pinto horse that was hitched there. The Kid ran on. From the shadows of the trail a horseman loomed up. It was Yuma Bill, a puncher of the Bar-T.

"Cinch him!" yelled the Kid.

Men were pouring out of the bunkhouse now, half-dressed, guns in hands. The shooting had roused the whole ranch. It had brought Yuma Bill riding in from the prairie. At the Kid's yell, Yuma Bill jumped at the black-bearded man who was clambering on the pinto.

There was a flash of steel in the starlight. A hoarse cry rang from the trail-rider, and he pitched to the ground. Black Alec dropped the bowie knife that was crimson to the hilt, flung himself across the pinto and galloped away. The Rio Kid reached the gate. Yuma Bill lay groaning in the trail; Black Alec, urging on the pinto with quirt and spur, was riding for his life.

Bang, bang!

The Kid, with blazing eyes, was shooting to kill now. But the fleeing rider, bending low in the saddle, vanished in the shadows of the prairie. Again and again the Kid fired as the rider vanished. But Black Alec was gone.

Ambushed on the Trail!

"DOGGONE him!" snarled the Kid. He holstered his smoking gun, dragged open the gate, and bent over the fallen trail-rider. A crowd of punchers surged round him.

"What's the rookus?" exclaimed Ginger, the horse-wrangler of the Bar-T.

"Yuma's got his!" said Texas.

"It was that doggoned skunk Black Alec!" hissed the Kid. "Bear a hand to get Yuma to his bunk, you'uns."

Yuma Bill was lifted from the trampled grass and carried into the bunkhouse. He was laid in his bunk, senseless; and

the Kid, with a set, grim face, washed and bandaged the wound in his brawny chest. The Bar-T punchers stood round in silence.

"I guess Yuma ain't going over the range," said the Kid at last. "But it was sure a close call for the guy; and he won't be riding the trail agin for a month o' Sundays."

"Hyer's the boss!" said Pecos.

Judge Pindex, boss of the Bar-T, appeared in the doorway of the bunkhouse, half-dressed, a revolver in his hand.

"Say, what's all this jamboree?" he inquired.

The Kid pointed to the wounded man in the bunk.

"It was sure Black Alec aiming to make you want a new foreman, sir," he answered. "He didn't get this baby, but he got Yuma with his bowie at the gate. And I guess I'm going to get Black Alec, if I have to trail him all over Texas, doggone him."

"I reckoned that doggoned cow-thief had lit out of the section," said the rancher.

"Lit out nothing!" grunted the Kid. "He sure moseyed along this-a-way for my scalp, and I had him under my gun and let him live! And here's as good a man as any in the bunch knocked over with a hole in his chest you could put a six-gun in. Carry me home to die! If I don't get that all-fired rustler you can call me a Digger Injun!"

"I guess I'll send word to the marshal at Red Dog, and they'll sure rope in Alex Black!" said the rancher.

The Kid snapped his teeth.

"It's your say-so, boss! But I reckon I'm going to ask you for a day off to pick up the trail of Alex Black."

"As many days as you want, Santa Fe," answered the rancher, and the Kid nodded and left the bunkhouse.

"Doggone it!" growled the Kid.

His mind was made up now. In the dim night even the Rio Kid, keen as an Apache or a Comanche, could not raise the trail of a galloping horse on the boundless prairie. But with the first gleam of dawn he aimed to take the trail; and he figured on following it till he had put paid to Black Alec.

Long before dawn the foreman of the Bar-T was ready. Side-Kicker was led from the corral, saddled and bridled. The Kid strapped on his rifle, packed his slicker-pack, and examined the walnut-butted guns meticulously. Dawn gleamed from the east, silvering the waving grass of the prairie. The Kid called to Texas. He did not forget his duties as foreman of the Bar-T, and he gave the puncher directions to carry on in his place.

"But you ain't going after that bull-dozer on your lonesome, Santa Fe!" objected Texas. "You sure want to take some of the boys along."

The Kid shook his head.

"I guess the boys are wanted on the ranch, Texas," he answered, "and I sure allow that I'm as good a man as Alex Black."

"You said it!" agreed Texas. "But I guess that doggoned lobo-wolf will aim to get you from behind a rock. He ain't the guy to give a galoot an even break."

"He sure ain't!" said the Kid. "But he won't get me from behind a rock in a gol-darned hurry, Texas. I'm going to rope him in and hand him over to the marshal at Red Dog, or else leave him for the turkey-buzzards—but if he gets me, Texas, I guess you'll make a good foreman for this ranch."

"Aw, forget it!" grunted Texas.

In the glimmering dawn the Kid walked with Side-Kicker's reins over his arm to the spot where Black Alec had disappeared. The trail of the pinto was light, but it was more than enough for the Kid. He followed it on foot for a little distance, and then mounted the grey mustang and rode.

The trail ran direct north, towards the Mesquite hills. The Kid had figured that that was the direction it would take, for it was only in the hills that the fugitive could find safety—if he could find it there. Hunting for a man who had vanished into the trackless sierra was a task that would have daunted the keenest sheriff in Texas. But the Rio Kid, who had beaten many a sheriff on the trail, figured that he was going to make the grade.

More than once the trail of the pinto was crossed by others, and the Kid had to dismount and pick up sign with searching eyes. Twice the trail was blotted out by the hoof-marks of a lumbering herd of cows, but each time the Kid picked it up again farther on towards the hills. Ahead of him now was an opening in the rocky line of the sierra; and the Kid, sure now of his direction, put the grey mustang to a gallop. It was yet morning when he struck the hills and rode into a rocky canyon. The canyon yawned wide between precipitous walls of rock, narrowing farther on to a gorge, where it was filled from side to side by a torrent that came foaming down from the uplands.

The Kid halted and scanned the canyon. On either bank of the torrent there was riding room till the gorge was reached, after which no horseman could ride up. On the left, a narrow ledge ran up the canyon wall, scarce three feet wide, and overhanging the torrent. An iron nerve was required to ride by such a path, but the Kid reckoned that that was the path Alex Black had taken—unless he had ridden into the canyon to camp there. He dismounted and scanned the ledge, and a trampled branch of juniper was sign enough for him. He remounted and rode up the ledge.

Higher and higher it rose, climbing the rugged wall of the canyon, widening here and there, then narrowing to barely a couple of feet. Black Alec had looked for pursuit, and he had left pursuers a hard trail to follow.

Side-Kicker, with the sure tread of a mountain cat, followed the dizzy ledge winding up the canyon wall. On the Kid's right, now, was a sheer fall of thirty feet, with the torrent raging and foaming at the bottom. Even the iron-nerved Kid did not care to look down as his right leg swung over dizzy space. And his eyes were watching the ledge slanting and winding up before him. It led to the high uplands—a trackless wilderness of rock and scrub. The Kid reckoned that he would be pleased, more than a few, when that stage of the trail was done, for if the fugitive had stopped to face pursuit there, nothing could save a pursuer. And suddenly from a bunch of pines that clung to the canyon wall over the ledge came a movement, and the Kid knew that Black Alec was there!

The roar of a rifle came the same second. The Kid, wary as a panther, flung himself down beside his horse's flank, with one leg over the saddle, and the bullet flew over him. But it was a desperate chance—for only on the side of the yawning gulf was there room—on the other side the grey mustang was brushing the rocky wall. The Kid hung over space, and there was a shrill squeal from the grey mustang and a wild clattering of hoofs on the ledge. For a fleeting instant the horse struggled to keep his footing, and then rolled screaming over the edge; and there was a yell of triumph from the bunch of pines as the Rio Kid and his horse went whirling down the cliff into the foaming torrent below.

A roar of rage burst from the cowpunchers as they saw their double-crossing foreman make a desperate break for freedom. They closed round him with guns flaming!

Through the Shadows of Death!

A WILD rush through the air—a crashing and splashing. Many a tight corner had the Rio Kid been in; many a time had grim death looked in the face of the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande. But in the flashing second as he shot downward, the Kid figured that the game was over and that he had struck the end of his wild life-trail.

Only a second, packed with long minutes of horror, before he struck the torrent, and the whirling waters closed over him and his horse. From the ledge above a black-bearded face with fierce eyes glared down. Black Alec was in time to see the Kid strike the torrent that tore him away as he struck it, rolling man and horse helplessly over as if in a giant's grip. With a six-gun in his hand, the cow-thief blazed away at the wild waters that had closed over the Kid, splashing lead right and left into the torrent. But there was little chance of the lead reaching the Kid; the rush of the descending waters tore him away at lightning speed. Whether he had been hit, Black Alec could not know; but he knew that his pursuer was swept away to merciless death, and his savage laugh rang out and echoed back from the rocky wall of the canyon.

The Kid hardly knew what was happening to him. The roar of the waters was in his ears; again and again he struck on a rock as he was swept down the gorge. Blinded, breathless, choked, dashed and beaten, the Kid's senses left him, and he knew that it was the end—and then he knew no more. It was a senseless body that the torrent tore and whirled on its raging way down the steep gorge.

It was the end—or was it the end? The Rio Kid had passed through the black bitterness of death, yet his eyes opened to the sunlight; he was conscious of dull aching in every bone, of water that swished and bubbled round him. Something was holding him—was dragging him—his face was free of the water—he was breathing. His dizzy brain could not take it in; only he knew that he was no longer whirling down the foaming gorge. He lay in bubbling, creaming water, the roar of the torrent still in his ears; and that grip on him was dragging—dragging—holding him back from death. Whether seconds passed, or minutes, the Kid never knew, but his dazed brain cleared at last and he could see and understand.

He was out of the gorge, in the lower canyon beyond the torrent. Over him loomed the grey mustang, drenched and dripping, knee-deep in water by the bank. It was Side-Kicker's teeth that fastened in his shirt, dragging him from the stream. In dazed wonder the Rio Kid realised what had saved him.

In the shallowing water by the bank below the falling torrent, the mustang struggled to keep his footing, while his teeth held his master. And the Kid, himself again at last, staggered up and clung to the horse, and the mustang struggled ashore with his master clinging to him with the last remaining ounce of his strength.

Out of the water, with solid rock under his feet, the Kid sank down.

Long he lay there, exhausted, with the burning sunlight streaming down on him, drying him. Beside him stood the mustang, his intelligent eyes on his master. The Kid was in no hurry to move. He lay waiting for his strength to revive. He had been through the valley of the shadow of death, and it had told even on the iron-limbed Kid.

But he rose to his feet at last.

Side-Kicker's soft muzzle nuzzled under his arm, and the Kid threw his arm round the glossy neck.

"I guess this ain't the first time you've pulled me through, old hoss," he murmured softly. "It ain't the first time, not by a whole jugful, I'll tell a man! But I guess we never had a closer call than that, you and me, old hoss! We surely never did!"

Carefully the Kid cleaned and re-loaded his guns. He looped the reins over his arm and led Side-Kicker to the ledge.

"It's us for the trail, old hoss," said the Kid, "and this time I reckon it's Alex Black that's going to get it where he lives. I guess that guy will sure be some surprised when he sees us, old hoss: he surely will."

Up the rocky ledge the Kid rode the grey mustang. Hours had passed since he had pitched into the torrent: it was long past noon. Burning heat blazed down into the canyon. The Kid chewed a stale flapjack as he rode; that was all the food he needed on a trail. Black Alec, he figured, had long gone, confident that he had stopped pursuit, that he had left his pursuer dead in the torrent. The Kid reached the bunch of pines high up the ledge, where the black-bearded cow-thief had lain in wait for him.

He found sign there of Alex Black and his pinto; but the sign was cold. As the Kid had judged, the cow-thief was long gone. The Kid followed on up the ledge, winding higher and higher into the uplands of the bleak sierra, till the perilous path ended at last on a high barren hillside. The afternoon sun was sloping down towards the sierras of New Mexico; the west was a blaze of crimson and gold. The shadows of the pines lengthened on the rocks.

Patient as an Apache or a hunting cougar, the Kid searched for sign of the man who had vanished into a wilderness of rock and scrub. There was little to be picked up, but that little was enough for the Rio Kid. Under the falling shadows the Kid pressed on, slowly but steadily, while the sun sank lower and lower and dipped at last behind the hills.

Darkness fell like a velvety cloak, but as the last light disappeared, the Kid knew that he was close to the end of the long and weary trail. Through the darkness that wrapped rocks and pines a red flicker of firelight gleamed blood-red against the blackness.

The Death Ride!

BLACK ALEC, sitting on a log by the camp-fire in the high sierra, threw an armful of pine cones on the fire.

The day had been hot, but the night was cold, bitterly cold on the high uplands, hundreds of feet above the plains of Texas. The fire burned crimson under the heap of cones and branches, sending up thick smoke. Had a pursuer still been on his trail Alex Black would not have ventured to start a fire, bitterly cold as it was. But his pursuer was drowned and dead in the mountain torrent—if seeing was believing. And every time he thought of the Kid's fearful plunge over the cliff the late foreman of the Bar-T grinned savagely.

At dawn he aimed to ride again across the sierra into New Mexico; into new country where he was not known. But in the dark he did not care to ride on by that wild and rugged way, where the uplands were split into steep arroyos and yawning, black barrancas—where a false step was death. But with his only pursuer dead in the mountain torrent, he had time on his hands; he could afford to wait till morning. And if the Bar-T bunch found what was left of their new foreman, and hunted him for vengeance, he would be long and far out of their reach.

His pinto, weary with the hard trail, lay near him. The horse lifted its head, its eyes gleaming in the firelight for a moment. Something had startled the horse.

The cow-thief stared into the night that surrounded him like a black wall. He listened, with a vague uneasiness in his breast. But there was no sound.

He rose from the log at last and unrolled his blankets. He kicked the fire, and a ruddy flame shot up from the pine-cones. Overhead, hardly a star gleamed in the sky; the night was cloudy and dark. With his blankets in his hands the cow-thief gave a sudden start and stood stock still, the blood racing to his heart. From the darkness, where he could see nothing, came a voice—a quiet voice that he knew, but that he had never dreamed to hear again.

"Hands up!"

He stood rooted.

"Hands up, you doggoned cow-thief! I've got you covered, and by the great horned toad, you're dead meat if you touch a gun! I've trailed you down, Mister Black, and you're my mutton, with the wool on."

A husky gasp came from Black Alec.

He swung slowly round, staring in the direction of the voice—the voice of the Rio Kid, the man he knew as Santa Fe Smith, the man he had sent to death in the rushing torrent. There was terror in his eyes; icy terror gripping his heart. His starting eyes stared into the darkness.

"I guess I ain't waiting!" came the Kid's voice. "Put up your hands, you doggoned cow-thief."

The face of the cow-thief flamed with fury.

He could not see the Kid, but he knew that the Colt was levelled as he stood against the light of the fire. The desperate thought was in his mind of springing to his horse; but the hand that never missed was raised, and in the light of the fire he was clear to the sight of the man he could not see. The fire had betrayed him to his enemy; the fire was showing him up to his enemy's aim. He stood by the fire, the unrolled blankets in his arms, staring—and the figure of the Rio Kid emerged into the radius of light, the grey mustang at his heels. His gun was levelled, his eyes glinting over it.

Black Alec's eyes burned at him across the flickering fire. The Kid's eyes narrowed.

"Hands up, Alex Black! Or——"

There was death in the grim Colt; death in the eyes that glinted over it.

The blankets dropped from Black Alec's hands—and they dropped over the fire, smothering it. Thick smoke rolled and eddied, but for the moment every gleam of light was blotted out. It was a desperate chance, and the cow-thief was taking it. As blackness rushed down, he threw himself on the ground, just as the Kid's gun roared.

A bullet grazed his head as he fell—and another spattered on the rocky soil an inch from him. The Kid expected to hear the answering roar of a six-gun, but Alex Black was not pulling a gun. He was rolling over to his horse; he was clutching at the pinto; he was throwing himself across the bare back.

Bang, bang, roared the Rio Kid's Colt, and the lead whined close by the panting cow-thief.

But in the darkness even the Kid was beaten to it; and in those wild moments Black Alec made the most of his chance. He was on the pinto, and a sudden clatter of hoofs echoed in the night as he dashed madly away. Bang, bang, roared the Colt behind, and a bullet drew blood from the cow-thief's cheek. But with merciless spurs he drove on the pinto, and mad galloping answered the Kid's shooting.

The Kid's teeth shut hard. With a spring he was on the grey mustang's back and dashing in pursuit of the cow-thief.

Gallop, gallop, came thundering back from the hill. It was madness to ride a race on the wild and rugged mountain, but there was death behind the cow-thief and he was taking chances. The Kid was not the man to be beaten to it. With cracking quirt he urged on the grey mustang, and Side-Kicker raced in pursuit.

Bang, bang! Spurts of fire came from the blackness ahead. The cow-thief was firing back. He fired wildly, almost at random, and the lead whined far from the Kid. But at the flashing of the Colt the Kid pulled trigger, and a yell floated back. The cow-thief was hit. But the galloping hoofs still rang on the rocks; if he was hit he was still keeping the horse's back, riding madly on through rugged rocks and enveloping darkness.

Clatter, clatter, rang the hoofs of Side-Kicker in pursuit. The echoes rolled back like thunder from the hill. The Kid, his teeth set, rode savagely, listening keenly as he rode. Even the Kid's keen ear could scarcely tell whether the hoof-beats that crashed back came from the fugitive, or were the echoes of his own

(Continued on page 419.)

RANGER DAN'S BULL'S-EYES!

Magistrate: "Where do you live?"

Tramp: "No where!"

Magistrate (to second tramp): "And where do you live?"

Second Tramp: "I've got the room above him."

(A Combination Knife has been awarded to D. Wilson, 67, South-east Road, Portabello, Dublin.)

* * *

Murphy: "Why is it you aren't on a diet as the doctor ordered, Pat?"

Pat: "Faith, I'm not going to starve to death just for the sake of living a little longer!"

(A Combination Knife has been awarded to E. McKeefry, 5, North Bull, Dollymount Dublin, Ireland.)

* * *

Teacher (to small boy who has a brother): "Where is your brother this morning?"

Boy: "Please, teacher, we were seeing who could lean out of the window farthest—and he won!"

(A grand Book has been awarded to H. Butterworth, 206, Shaw Road, Royton, Oldham, Lancs.)

* * *

The pompous little major was boring the club smoking-room with his yarns. At last, however, he raised smiles.

"Yes," he said, "the Grassoppa Pass can only be crossed by asses and mules. I know—I speak from experience."

(A Fretwork Outfit has been awarded to Keith Jessop, 7, Lindhurst Avenue, Bredbury, near Stockport.)

Tompkins: "I want to buy a necktie."

Shopman: "Yes, sir. Here is one that is very much worn."

Tompkins: "What do you take me for? I want a new one. I've got plenty of worn ones at home!"

(A Warneford Tractor Plane has been awarded to V. Goodman, 40, Napier Road, Luton, Beds.)

* * *

The heavy-weight boxer was describing his latest fight.

"Yes," he said, "my opponent had to be taken to hospital with a broken nose, two black eyes, a twisted shoulder-blade and a fractured jaw."

"Oh," exclaimed a friend, "did he have a row with the referee?"

(A Wallet has been awarded to W. Freckleton, 2, Wark Avenue, Bertram Place, Shiremoor, Northumberland.)

American in Scotland: "Say, tell me where I am. I'm lost!"

Scot: "Is there a reward for ye?"

American: "No."

Scot: "Then ye're still lost."

(A Giant Torch has been awarded to G. Bishop, 36, Windsor Street, York Road, Leeds.)

* * *

The auctioneer was holding up a pair of silver candlesticks.

"Give me a start!" he cried.

"Fourpence!"

"What!"

"Ah!" said the bidder, "I thought that would give you a start!"

(A fine Speed Boat has been awarded to W. Irving, "The Summit," Dumfries, Scotland.)

* * *

Magistrate: "The evidence shows that you threw a brick at the constable."

Bill Bruiser: "It shows more'n that—it shows I 'it 'im!"

(A Table Tennis Set has been awarded to T. Griffiths, 73, Rutland Street, Millfield, Sunderland, Co. Durham.)

* * *

A famous footballer was relating an experience to his clubmates.

"I was rushing through the Rangers' defence with the ball at my feet," he said, "when suddenly I saw the goal in front. Raising my foot, I shot with all my force."

Listener: "And did you score?"

Footballer: "Score! Why, man, it took me half-an-hour to get my foot out of the bedposts. I was dreaming."

(A grand Book has been awarded to E. Rowbottom, 10, Lewis Street, Shaw, near Oldham.)

* * *

Young Ashby joined the Army and had to take up a riding course.

"Sergeant," he said to the old veteran in charge of the riding school, "pick me out a nice, gentle horse, will you?"

"Right," said that worthy. "Have you ever ridden before?"

"Never," confessed the recruit.

"Good. Then I've got the very horse for you. Here's one that's never been ridden before. You can both start out together."

(An Ensign Camera has been awarded to W. Fisher, Barkston, near Grantham, Lincs.)

* * *

"What a debt we owe to medical science," remarked father as he laid down the paper.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed mother. "Haven't you paid that doctor's bill yet?"

(A Warneford Tractor Plane has been awarded to E. Cooper, Church Street, Long Buckby, near Rugby.)

* * *

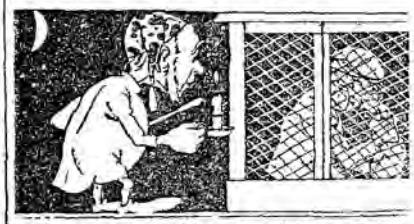
Pat and Mike were on the river bank looking for a job. A diver came to the surface of the water and Pat said:

"Hi! Your boss want any men down there?

"I don't know," replied the diver. "Come and see for yourself."

Pat turned to Mike: "If I'm not up in ten minutes, you'll know I've started!" And he dived in!

(A Fretwork Outfit has been awarded to G. Woods, 5a7c, Park Road, near Alfred Place, Dingle, Liverpool.)



Farmer (outside his disturbed hen roost at night): "Who's there?"

Muffled Voice from Within: "Only us chickens, guv'nor!"

(A Fretwork Outfit has been awarded to P. Lang, "Pendennis," Bishops Way, Andover, Hants.)

* * *

Bobbie: "Why is father singing, mother?"

Mother: "He's singing baby to sleep."

Bobbie: "Well, if I were baby I'd pretend to sleep!"

(A Combination Knife has been awarded to J. Finn, 35, Spenser Street, Bootle, Liverpool.)

* * *

Willie: "That mouth-organ you gave me for my birthday is easily the best present I've had, uncle."

Uncle: "I'm glad to hear that."

Willie: "Yes, mother gives me sixpence a week not to play it!"

(A Table Tennis Set has been awarded to S. Fay, 25, Leyland Avenue, Gatley, Cheshire.)

PRIZES FOR JOKES.

Do you know a funny joke? Good! Then send it to Ranger Dan. He's presenting marvellous prizes to readers whose efforts cause him mirth. Address your jokes to "Ranger Dan's Bull's-Eyes," No. 15, THE RANGER, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.), and enclose the coupon, filled in, shown below.

Ranger Dan's decision is final.

"Ranger Dan's Bull's-Eyes."

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Ranger, No. 15.

whirling upwards. A dense fog wrapping everything.

Bruce got his seat, fell prone along the tank, his gauntleted hands pressed to the bars. He bored in through a dust cloud, and shot out through the billowed smoke.

The race was on!

To his right a sky-blue speedster hugged him. To left, Rodman carved through a flung-out bunch of riders. Straggled along the straight, the field spun out. Then the turn—a dark-brown wave of spurting dirt—a dizzy swing astern—and round to face ahead again.

Another mad dash down the straight. A throng of riders falling out of view behind. One after another they slipped away. A few remained. The blue machine, another, and Rodman, hanging on the sky-blue's tail.

R-r-r-p! Then the corner.

Scotty's back wheel slewed out and raked the loose brown ground. The sky-blue speedster shivered in towards him, all but kissed his knee, and shook away, an inch to spare.

Inside he saw the red and aluminium bike bore. Rodman slashed through; his back tyre wobbled in a trailing arc. It touched the sky-blue rider's foot—shook him—then shot away to a puff of oil-smoke. As Scotty took the straight beyond, he glimpsed the American's tail.

Head down the pair streaked for the next turn, Scotty's front wheel hugging Buster's back. Together they dived baldheaded into the bend, broadsiding neck to neck.

Nearer and nearer Rodman swung, till it seemed a cannon was a cert.

Bruce forced the bars around, his muscles swelling to the frightful strain. The American's wheel shot in, and missed. Bruce wobbled, took the wire net fence, bounced off and went into a violent jazz.

Another swerve—a fierce lock of his tortured wrists. The good bike flattened out upon a level keel. The straight—a whirring maze of phantom posts and fencing—a sickly blur of pale, white faces, nightmare——

What was that at the far corner—the south-east? That stir among the crowd—men thrusting through the forefront of the press about the rails?

Castro—uniformed police! They were mounting—dropping over the fence on to the track!

The Scot's pulses jazzed. At last he guessed the truth! That south-east corner cut into Castro's territory. On the last lap, the police chief aimed to make a swoop!

Bruce slid a finger down the bars and touched the throttle lever. The bike leaped forward like a thing possessed—flamed down the straight, caught Rodman's bike, and passed it. A hurricane of up-flung dust, of smoke and spurting fire, the yellow speedster smashed into the turn.

A knot of braided figures jumped out in a waving line as the Scotsman's back wheel hinged around.

A hand grabbed out and Scotty's dropped bars wobbled. He sloshed his armoured gauntlet in the snarling face and barged on through a phalanx of police.

The sky-blue motor streaked up round the turn, scattered the shouting cops and spun into a frightful jazz. The epicentre of a whirling cloud, its rider ankled desperately to save himself. Then Rodman dashed in with a breakneck plunge, and the pair crashed wildly in a drunken mix-up.

Vaguely Bruce saw the American rear up from the threshing heap—start his machine and thrust off for the straight. Bruce gave his bike a shove, jumped for the saddle and roared off down the straight. In his deafened ears, a blaring roar of cheers came after him.

The finishing line ahead—the chequered flag upraised. A jerk—a sickening crunch afront him. He glimpsed his front wheel buckle.

His front wheel had gone! Done!

No! With a frenzied heave he flung backwards, strained outwards in the saddle. The front forks lifted till the bike heaved up on its back tyre like a bucking broncho.

He swayed, held it, and rattled down the last few yards, the wreckage of a wheel dangling before him.

The finish line—the flag—a swift down swoop—then a red and silver streak that smashed past him. Rodman!

He glimpsed a far-off movement by the rails—a pouring-in, like drifting sand into a hole. It was the infuriated crowd, handling Castro's policemen.

A thunderous roar went up that shook the blazing skies. Dirty Dick's cap went scudding in the air.

Scotty fell a-sprawl upon his bucking mount as it flopped down in the dirt.

But through the murk of dust and Castrol smoke, he saw the sparkle of the precious silver belt.

His—by a foot!

("Broadside Bruce" and "Dirty Dick" involved in breathless adventures in the heart of the South American continent. You'll enjoy every word of next week's all-thrilling story of dirt-track racing abroad.)

THE OUTLAW KID!

(Continued from page 414.)

horse's feet. He cracked his quirt as he felt his horse slackening in its stride.

"Get on, old hoss, doggone you!" hissed the Kid. "Get on, doggone your pesky hide! You want to let that rustler best us to it!"

And for once the Kid gave the grey mustang a touch of the spur. But neither quirt nor spur availed, and the mustang halted; for the first time disobedient to his master.

"Doggone you!" roared the Kid. "What's got you, hoss?"

But the mustang, his feet planted firmly, did not stir. And in the silence of the echoes that followed his halt the Kid realised that he could no longer hear the galloping ahead.

Where was Black Alec? Had he halted—was he turning at bay, desperate, gun in hand? Leaning over the mustang's neck the Kid strained his eyes ahead in the blackness. And an icy thrill ran through his veins as he searched out a rough edge of rock not a yard ahead of his halted mustang—the rugged edge of a yawning barranca. The Rio Kid, who had never known fear, felt for a moment a chill at his heart.

He slipped from the saddle. He trod forward—softly, cautiously. He knew now why the grey mustang had stopped, why neither whip nor spur would drive him another step onward. One more stride of his horse would have plunged the Kid over the verge of the rocky chasm that stretched before him—black, yawning, wide, of unplumbed depth. With a beating heart the Rio Kid stared over the brink of the fearful gulf.

"Carry me home to die!" breathed the Kid.

He knew now why no galloping echo came back from the night. The gulf that yawned before the Kid had yawned before Alex Black; but the pinto had not stopped in time.

He listened.

No sound came up from the black depths. A hundred feet below, at least, lay the rugged rocks on which horse and rider had crashed in the darkness. The Kid turned back.

It was the end of the trail!

(More trouble visits the Rio Kid at the Bar-T Ranch in next week's Smashing Tale of the Wild West. But the Kid faces it with both guns out—like the fighter he is!)

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