

THE MOONLIT WAY

men whose heads, shoulders and rifles were visible above the swampy growth beyond.

Suddenly Renoux, who was watching him in bitter silence, saw him turn and beckon violently.

"Quick!" he said in a low, eager voice. "He may have found a ditch to shelter us!"

Renoux was correct in his surmise: Barres stood with drawn pistol, awaiting them in a muddy ditch which ran through the reeds diagonally across the marsh. It was shin-deep in water.

"We could make a pretty good stand in a ditch like this, couldn't we?" he demanded excitedly.

"You bet we can!" replied Renoux, jumping down beside him, followed by Westmore, Alost and Souchez in turn.

Barres, leading, ran down the ditch as fast as he could, spattering himself and the others with mud and water at every step.

"Here!" panted Renoux, clambering nimbly out of the ditch and peering ahead through the reeds. Then he suddenly stood upright:

"Halt!" he shouted. "It's all up with you, Skeel! Keep away from that boat, or I order my men to fire!"

There was a dead silence for a moment; then Skeel's voice:

"Better not bother us, my good man. We know our business and you'd better learn yours."

"Skeel," retorted Renoux, "my business is other people's business, sometimes. It's yours just now. I warn you to keep away from that boat!" He turned and hailed the boat in the next breath: "Boat ahoy! Keep off or we open fire!"

The metallic bang of a rifle cut him short and his