

Then, to his horse:

"Come on! Come on, you beauty! We're there! We've made it!"

The mare plunged forward. In front of him, across the rim of a cup-shaped valley, Tom saw a number of small figures.

The French! Doubtless an outpost, or a scouting party. They came up on level ground. They stood erect, bent forward purposefully. One, most likely the leader, waved his arms.

Again Tom yelled. A great joy surged in his heart—and then, quite suddenly, it seemed as if a giant hand was plucking him, from the saddle and hurling him through the air. Then it seemed to him as if he sank into a cushion of air.

For a fleeting moment, though he could not utter a sound, he saw quite clearly. He saw his horse, a few feet away, rolling on its back, waving its legs as in a pitiful appeal for mercy . . .

The whole world seemed to totter crazily. The morning sun, blazing through the mist, heaved like the bow of a ship, then swung to and fro in a mad, golden pendulum.

He felt a dull jar.

Consciousness faded out.

When Tom came to, he found himself in a large tent. There was something moist and cool on his forehead. For a moment he lay still. Then he opened his eyes, and he saw that he was stretched out on a hospital cot and that, sitting by his side, was Bertha.

She leaned over without a word and kissed his lips, "What—happened . . .?"