

The Man from the Wastes 5

"You know me, Red!" Radley told him. "And—it's real honest. Pierre le Grand's played the traitor on me, and——" he pulled his trigger as he spoke and one of the men out there on the whiteness dropped; another went down as Mackintosh, evidently quite content to take Radley's word, fired too, and then all the pursuers went to ground to avoid the fire they realized would be coming against them.

So, for what seemed to Hal Newlands an interminable time, the two parties lay, and the youngster sensed that was but the lull before a storm, the breathing space before what was a grim, determined quarrel. From what he heard of Radley he knew that the man was not one to pick quarrels for nothing, but that when once he was in, he was in till the very end. Neither Red nor Radley had spoken after that burst of firing, both had been intently watching the blotches far away, which were the unconcealed portions of the men lying there, buried as far as they could be in the snow even as these three others were buried.

It was Mackintosh who broke the silence. He had shifted his gaze for a brief moment to turn and look at Radley, and as he did so he gave vent to a low exclamation.

"Radley!" he cried. "You're wounded and——"

Radley nodded—that is to say it seemed so—but, as a matter of fact, what he did was to sag and let go his musket.