

answer in the distance. There was a melancholy wailing of falling shells. Tom's horse plunged, swerved, nearly fell, but his hands reached out, soothing, strong.

"Nothing to be afraid of," he said. "It's all right, old girl. Now, then—look out for that tree," as, the moon hidden by an inky cloud bank, a huge, gnarled oak sprang from the darkness, then was swallowed again in the darkness as, obeying Tom's hand, the mare sidewheeled.

"Bully for you," commended Tom. "A little less nervousness, and I'd turn you into a range pony."

And he rode on, getting the utmost speed from his horse, for another thought had come to him. Suppose something happened to Vyvyan and the girl? Even so, there still was France, and, though he was unfamiliar with the Thionville approach, he might get direct to the Verdun lines and give warning—in case Vyvyan failed.

Suddenly, though he rode for his life, all personal considerations of safety whirled away and disappeared like rubbish in the meeting of winds.

Only one thing mattered:

The French! Verdun!

There was something maniacal, something grimly fanatic about the thought, the steely resolution, and, in that hour, as he rode through the night, the soul of the simple, straight, square Westerner rose to the height of greatness.

On!

The horse panted, breathed heavily, staccato. But something of the man's unconquerable spirit seemed to flow into the animal consciousness. It was tired. Tired to dropping. Its muscles pained. Its lungs, tortured, extended, then suddenly contracted, quivered as the motion of the legs pumped the air through.