

Crawling Stone Wash

possible to recall Kennedy and Scott without giving an alarm, but by a quick *détour* he could at least hold the quarry back for twenty minutes with his rifle, and in that time Kennedy and Scott could come up.

Less than half an hour of daylight remained. If the outlaws could slip down the wash and out into the Crawling Stone Valley they had every chance of getting away in the night; and if the third man should be Barney Rebstock, Whispering Smith knew that Sinclair thought only of escape. Smith alone, of their pursuers, could now intercept them, but a second hope remained: on the left, Wickwire was high enough to command every turn in the bed of the river. He might see them and could force them to cover with his rifle even at long range. Casting up the chances, Whispering Smith, riding faster over the uneven ground than anything but sheer recklessness would have prompted, hastened across the waste. His rifle lay in his hand, and he had pushed his horse to a run. A single fearful instinct crowded now upon the long strain of the week. A savage fascination burned like a fever in his veins, and he meant that they should not get away. Taking chances that would have shamed him in cooler moments, he forced his horse at the end of the long ride to within a hundred paces of the river, threw his lines, slipped like