

turnpike, as though we were going home that way. But if they keep forward down the turnpike road, after talking awhile you take the field road we came by, and I'll follow them as far as the bend in the road, about half a mile down, where there is a foot road that crosses the fields and joins the other field road behind the hill, about two miles from here, I should say."

"I see," said Wyatt.

Wyatt and Snarr had stopped while thus talking at the end of the bridge farthest from the village.

The three men following them when they arrived at the bridge, paused in a sort of undecided, objectless way, and leaned over the parapet.

Wyatt saw the move and so did Jim.

"I told you those fellows were dogging me," said Wyatt, "but we can easily prove it; you keep forward down the road and I'll go up the hill by the field road, and we can make a pretence of parting at the stile. I'll wait for you on the hill, and you can keep a sharp watch whether they attempt to follow me or not."

By this time it was getting dusk, so that while objects could be seen in mass when moving, nothing very particular could be distinguished.

"If they are going to dog, we can dodge," said Jim. They walked on slowly to the stile, up which Wyatt mounted, and speaking to each other in louder tones, as though parting in earnest, Jim started at a sharp walk down the turnpike, while Wyatt began to ascend the hill on the left.

The men lounging on the bridge, the very personification of listlessness, suddenly became animated, the parting ruse had deceived them.

"That's Wyatt, lads," said the wearer of the red neckcloth.

"Ai, ai, that's him, sure enough," answered one of the others, whom they called Snap, "I have not seen him for a goodish while, but I canno' mistake that chap; watch him *heow* he climbs that hill."

"He's making pretty good time, sure enough," said the third, "but in place of standing here watching him, I'm thinking

we should be on the move, if we are to give him a drubbing."

"That's so," said Welch, "we have to catch the game before we cook it; but I wanted to see whether yond other fellow was going along with him or not."

"Well if we are to go, let's be going," said Snap, "I suppose we all understand what's to be done."

The three men now started, not in direct pursuit of Wyatt, but descending to the bank of the river, they started up beside the stream until they passed a bend round the foot of the hill, where they left the river and ascended a narrow ravine.

Jim Snarr did not go far down the turnpike; as soon as he was out of sight, from the bridge: he leapt the low wall and returned to a position where he could watch the movements of the three men. He could see they were on the alert, and no sooner did they descend to the river, than he started up the hill as fast as he could go.

Wyatt on reaching the brow of the hill, crept behind a low wall on the very edge of the almost precipitous descent; owing to the thin scattering of snow, he could see any dark object plainly, but nowhere could he discover the three men, he was expecting to see following him up the hill. There was one man, however, ascending rapidly, and as he clambered the wall and leapt into the foot-path, almost below him, he was certain it was Jim Snarr.

Wyatt walked along the brow of the hill to a place where the foot-path passed some thirty feet below him, and just as Jim reached this part of the road Wyatt called out "Snarr."

Jim paused, looked up, and answered, "Wyatt."

Clinging to the bushes, or any projecting object he could seize, Jim mounted to the edge of the cliff, where Wyatt's aiding hand assisted him to the top.

"How is this Jim?" was the first question.

Jim was out of breath; so with a sweep of his arm he pointed out the direction, and conveyed the idea of the *double* being practised upon him.