

324 THE STORY OF THE FOSS RIVER RANCH

The girl shivered and turned away with a look of utter loathing on her face. She appealed to her lover.

"Bill—Bill, send him away. It's—it's too horrible."

"Lord" Bill fixed his grey eyes on the Breed.

"Scatter—we've had enough."

"Eh? Guess yer per-tickler."

There was a truculent tone in Baptiste's voice.

Bill's revolver was out like lightning.

"Scatter!"

And in that word Baptiste realised his dismissal.

His face looked very ugly, but he moved off under the covering muzzle of the white man's pistol.

Bill watched him until he was out of sight. Then he turned to Jacky.

"Well? Which way?"

Jacky did not answer for a moment. She gazed at the mountains. She shivered. It might have been the chill morning air—it might have been emotion. Then she looked back in the direction of Foss River. Dawn was already streaking the horizon.

She sighed like a weary child, and looked helplessly about. Her lover had never seen her vigorous nature so badly affected. But he realised the terrors she had been through.

Bill looked at her.

"Well?"

"Yonder." She pointed to the distant hills. "Foss River is no longer possible."

"The day that sees Lablache—"

"Yes—come."

Bill gazed lingeringly in the direction of the settlement. Jacky followed his gaze. Then she touched Nigger's flank with her spur. Golden Eagle cocked his ears, his head was turned towards Bad Man's Hollow. He needed no urging. He felt that he was going home.