

deep gorges, with towering cliffs on either side. The country was becoming more broken, severed here and there by great ravines, with strips of forest intervening. Shal's sense of security increased. The openness of the prairie had been a nightmare to him. He calculated that by midnight he would reach the Lone Tree Hills, where a hundred men might hide themselves from an entire army, so wild and densely wooded was the country.

The sun had sunk into a blood-red sea of light when Shal at length reached the recognized trail across the divide. There was no trail blazed, but the way was comparatively simple. He had reached the crest of the ascent and for a moment appeared silhouetted against the sky, when a rifle shot stabbed the stillness from the slope below.

The cayuse bounded forward with a snort of terror, and Shal realized that the animal was hit. Next moment it swerved to the right and broke into a gallop, the bit between its teeth, its breath coming and going with a strange choking sound.

Shal knew now what was wrong. His mount was shot through the lungs, and was bearing him on its last mad struggle for life. Headlong over the loose rocks it carried him—along the crown of the ridge, up and up, at times staggering as it went.

four hundred feet on every side. He's riding right into a corner."

"Guess he can't help it," answered another, regarding a crimson blotch on the ground at his feet. "Looks to me as though the cayuse is shot through the lungs. If it is it may take him clean over."

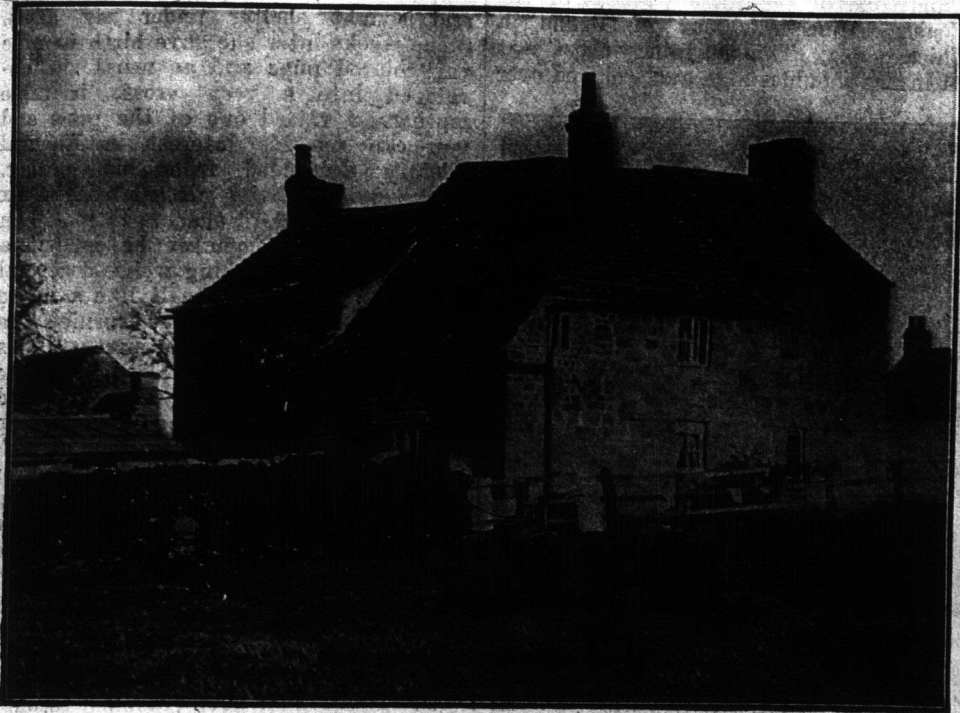
They rode leisurely in Shal's tracks, till they gained the crown. Ahead of them was the blood-trail, but no horseman. The leader urged his cayuse into a gallop, and next minute Shal heard the men at the foot of the jackpine.

One of them lay at the edge and looked down. Four hundred feet below was a terrific rapid, boiling and tumultuous. The man adjusted his glasses. He could just make out the grey shape of a cayuse, lying among the rocks and half in the water.

"It's taken him over all right," said the leader of the posse, again examining the hoof marks at the edge of the cliff. "He'd land clear of the cayuse, and he'll be well on his way to the lakes now. Seems to me a kind of a pity!"

"How's that? Saves trouble, doesn't it?"

The leader shrugged his shoulders. "Seems to me that a man who rides the country of such a skunk as Tim Carson ought to have a monument set up to his memory as a benefactor to mankind. Be-



Guy Fawkes' House, Sooton, Yorkshire, Eng.

The head of the ridge was reached—Shal saw the plateau in front of him standing out clearly against the sky—beyond it—space! He had ridden out on to a cape, as it were. Ahead of him, on every side, was a sheep drop into the valley below. He threw his weight on one rein—trying to turn the cayuse on its own tracks, but the dying beast bore straight on, blind to all obstacles, unconscious of its rider's effort.

Ere Shal had time to think he was on the edge of the precipice. Directly ahead of him grew a single jackpine, the lower branches of which, it seemed, must sweep him from the saddle.

It was then that the man acted without conscious thought, and achieved a feat which otherwise he could never have achieved. He swung himself clear of the saddle, clutching to one of the lower branches with both hands. The cayuse passed from under him; for a moment he swung giddily outwards, the strain on his arms threatening to dislocate the joints. He saw the pony disappear from view within a dozen feet—fall silently into space almost as he left the saddle.

Next moment Shal had drawn himself into a sitting position on the branch he had clutched. Quickly his dazed senses returned. He realized that his life was still at stake. Glancing over the ridge he could see nothing of the sheriff or his men.

Twilight was rapidly settling into darkness, and above him Shal saw a thick canopy of branches, secure amidst a mass of shadows. He began to climb swiftly upwards till the ground was hidden from his view.

"Doesn't know the country, evidently," said the man who had fired from the ambush. "We got him, now, sure. The cliffs at the top of the ridge drop a sheer

sides, it's just a matter of a life for a life, and the girl's gone. I reckon the sheriff would have been glad to let it drop after that. We'd best hike back, boys, and advise him."

As Shal Morris lay under the stars that night he thought of the child he had seen in Berwick's Saloon at Outlaw Camp. He realized with a start that the little fellow was now an orphan, thrown upon the hospitality of one of earth's rottenest cities. Shal clenched his teeth and beat his fists together. Before his eyes floated a second vision—a woman's face, sublimely beautiful, a woman's small hands upraised to defend him. He buried his face in the fresh green grass on which he lay, that woman's name upon his lips.

Very early next morning Shal Morris was under way. He went to the Baseline camp, and traded the gold ring he wore with the Indians for a cayuse and outfit. It was then that he turned his steps southwards on a journey which seemed, on the face of things, to be one of surprising folly.

Five nights later Shal Morris entered Berwick's saloon. He went straight to the bar tender, ignoring the gesture of warning that greeted him. "I've come for the kiddy—Carson's kiddy," Shal said simply.

"What you going to do with him?" enquired a sad eyed woman from a table near.

Shal Morris turned on her savagely. "Take him away, somewhere where he can breathe clean air," he told her.

The bartender regarded him pensively. "Guess it's the squarest thing you can do, boss, since it was you who made the kid an orphan," he answered. "But I reckon you're an all-fired idiot to come butting round this camp again. Take my tip, and don't waste time."

The woman rose to her feet, and mo-



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