

possession of Sam, and when Jack moved forward, he softly asked him what he intended to do.

"Have them out," replied Jack resolutely, "they must give themselves up."

He went on ahead and his companions followed him.

When within ten yards of the cave, he called out, "Jake Blunt. Come out or we will shoot."

"Give us time," was the answer, in a faint, hollow voice, "we air comin' as fast as we can."

Dragging footsteps were heard, and one of the men coughed. Jack held his rifle at the present to awe the horse-thieves into complete submission when they appeared. His purpose was to compel them to walk in front of himself and his chums until they came to the men in the rear, who would take charge of them. It promised to be a notable capture.

Jake Blunt appeared at the mouth of the cave, walking feebly and staggering along, like a man in the last extremity of feebleness and distress. His head was bent down so as to be partly hidden, but enough of it was visible to reveal that his cheeks were pinched and his mouth drawn.

He advanced a few steps, and suddenly reeling, fell at full length, face downwards. Jack moved up to him and stood between Jake Blunt's outstretched arms, looking down at him. Then two hands darted forward and grasped Jack by the ankles, and with a jerk he was thrown.

Out from the cave darted Silva de Gama, armed with a heavy stick. The fall of Jack and the appearance of the Portuguese was so momentary and unexpected that Charlie and Sam were taken by surprise. Sam was felled by a blow from the stick, and Silva de Gama closed with Charlie.

The two rascals had suffered and lost much of their old strength, but they were strong men still. Jake Blunt half rose, moved his body quickly forward and pinned Jack