

Trails to Two Moons 37

She had journeyed perhaps ten miles when a speck on the thin ribbon of dust ahead of her slowly took shape of horse and rider. As she drew near she recognized the tall, gaunt shape and prophet's beard of Uncle Alf, the circuit rider — crazy Uncle Alf, he was known to all the Big Country. Something bulky cumbered the saddle before him and dropped to either side in shapeless, swaying extremities. Uncle Alf recognized her when she was still a distance away. He halted his horse and shot one skinny arm high above his head, the hand wide spread.

"The murderer rising with the light killeth, and in the night is as a thief." His hail came bellowing in deep diapason, — a voice almost terrifying in volume. The circuit rider's eyes showed white under his flapping hat brim; the eyes of Jeremiah they were.

"I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of earth!" Uncle Alf swept his outstretched arm in a fearsome gesture.

Hilma rode, clear-eyed, close to the evangelist's side and looked down at that which he carried over his saddle horn. It was the body of her father, murdered.