

The Man from the Wastes

7

he spoke, and grinned a little grimly as he tied it on his musket barrel.

"New sort of white flag, Hal!"

It was indeed, being a flaming red handkerchief, but Hal could not smile even at that, he was feeling tense, just a little nervy and rather overpowered by the knowledge that in a moment or so the lives of Radley and Mackintosh would be in his keeping.

"Ready, Hal?" Red asked, and the boy nodded, whereupon Mackintosh got upon his feet, the musket raised and the handkerchief fluttering in the wind.

Hal lay with his eye glued along his barrel, waiting, wondering, and, now that the time for action had come, steady.

"Hallo, there, Grand!" Mackintosh's voice boomed across the waste. "Wanter speak to you! Quick! This is Red Mackintosh!"

One of the blotches moved slightly, and Hal gripped his musket tighter. Red Mackintosh stood with his left arm raised, and the hand empty, while the improvised flag was held high so that his musket was useless; he was, in fact, at the mercy of a shot from one of the men out yonder. But the shot did not come. Instead, the moving figure got upon its feet and another "flag" waved in the air.

"'Lo, Red!" came the man's voice. "What is it? Where's that skunk Radley and——"

"Don't know nothin' 'bout your quarrel, Grand!" shouted Mackintosh. "An' anyways, Radley's no skunk. But I ain't for throwin' words