

Suddenly she changed her direction slightly, and her pursuer was able to take a short cut to where she was now heading.

A low cry of satisfaction broke from the inspector's lips as he perceived where the fugitive was heading. He knew that a steep, but narrow gulch ran through the country at right angles to the line his quarry had now taken. It was evident to the police-officer that the fugitive was unaware of this, and that when he realized it he would have to check his horse, and his capture would then be easy.

But the girl knew exactly what she was doing, and was indeed acting on a suddenly conceived plan. She knew that, though the inspector's horse was swifter than the one she was riding, it was also carrying a much heavier weight. She also knew that the animal she bestrode was a perfect jumper, and as such horses are rare in Canada, she argued that in all probability that of her pursuer was not. The plan she intended carrying out was a very daring one, but she decided to attempt it, and if successful, she believed she would be able to bring the pursuit to an end.

The man riding behind was now making no special effort to come up with the fugitive; he had every confidence that the long race would terminate to his satisfaction.

But the fleeing figure in front kept straight on.

Nelly was within a hundred yards of the gulch, and was increasing her horse's speed. As the animal thundered towards the open chasm, she turned in the saddle for an instant to regard her pursuer.

The next instant she was steadying her horse for the awful leap.

At the place she had selected the distance across was some ten or twelve feet; there was a good take-off, and a satisfactory landing place on the other side; but if the horse failed to negotiate the jump, both it and its rider would go hurtling down to the rocky floor fifty feet below.

The girl knew what the penalty of failure would mean, but did not flinch. Her mouth closed firmly as the excited animal she bestrode dashed at the intervening space, and her grip tightened on the saddle. True to his reputation as a jumper, the good horse judged the right moment, rose, flashed through the air, and landed on the other side.

Checking his speed, Nelly turned a flushed face to see what her pursuer was doing.

The next instant a low cry of dismay broke from her lips, for Combrone was preparing his horse to take the dangerous leap. For an instant she thought of wheeling round, and by revealing her identity, prevent what might bring fatal results. But as she gazed, she realized that it was too late, and that anything she might do would only disconcert the horse and rider.

A shiver ran through her as the pursuing horse galloped at the dark gulch. She felt that she ought to have known that a man like Combrone would face death before relinquishing a task to which he had put himself.