

broke out in the east and then they shone over him, and the west was blue at last as the moon rose in the east. The solace of the time was upon him, and for a little time his heart was easier.

"The boys won't let Walker shoot him up any," he said, hopefully. "They're a fine lot of boys in the City, and I reckon some day they'll make Walker like a sieve." But when he went into the house he took down his father's old shot gun and looked at it.

"I'll be the only one left," said Jeff, as he put it back in its place; "the only one but Sis."

But nevertheless he slept soundly when he was once in the blankets, and he never woke till it was past midnight and the high moon made the prairie almost as light as day.

When he woke he sat up suddenly.

"Paw," he called; "paw, is that you?"

But there was no answer, and he came to himself.

"I thot I heard the old man," he said. And even as he spoke he heard the sound of a horse coming across the prairie at a lope. He sprang out of the bed and ran to the door.

"That ain't paw, unless he's left the wagon in the City," he said. "There's times he will, when he ain't sober and ain't rightly full." Yet he knew how unlikely it was that the old man should do so now. There was seldom a time that poor old Dexter wasn't "rightly full" when he came back home. And the sound came nearer, nearer yet. In another minute the horseman pulled up outside the shack.

"Ez that you, Jeff?" he asked.

"Why, certainly, Bill Davies," said Jeff, with a sinking heart. "What's brot you this way? Hev you come from the City, and hev you seen my dad?"

Bill Davies got off his pony and leaving it with the bridle reins on the ground, came up to Jeff. He was a cowboy from Ennis Creek, and was not often that way.

"I've rode out to tell you about him," said Bill quietly.

"O," said Jeff. "I know. He's dead, Bill."

"He's gone, Jeff."

"And Walker shot him?"

"He's the third Windy Walker has shot and killed in two years," said Davies. "And 'twill be self-defence. Jeff. Your old man started to pull no him and was as slow getting out his gun as a mud turtle on dry land. And Walker pulled down on him and shot him threw three times before he reached the ground. The poor old man is dead, Jeff. Don't greive, Jeff."

But Jeff swallowed his tears.

"I ain't grievin' now, Bill Davies. I'll find time when Walk'r's dead," he said in a choking voice.

Bill Davies shook his head. "'Twas self-defence, Jeff; it was sure. For las' night they had a sort of difficulty, and we held your old man down, and he said he'd shoot Walker on sight. And Walker laffed. And we got your dad out o' town fightin' somethin' awful. And he pulled his gun first. There's four to take the stand and say so. There won't be no trouble for Walker. He says he'll do the thing handsome and bury the old man in style."

Jeff threw up his head.

"Yen ain't defendin' Walker, now, are you Bill Davies?"

The cowboy shrugged his shoulders.

"Me defend him, Jeff. He's the meanest sort of a murderer. He don't take chances with any but old men and the tenderfeet. He ain't the man to kill wren it ain't self-defence. He looks for self-defence, and is greedy for it. I'd like to see him laid out cold, and before I buried him in style I'd see the dogs eat him."

"I'll kill him," said Jeff. "Will you sleep here, Bill and lend me your pony, so's I can go in to town and see paw. I'll send the pony back early."

"You kin ride," said Bill. "I'll stay here. Do you mean what you say, Jeff?"

"Sure death," said Jeff; "ain't he killed paw? Who else is there?"

Bill Davies shook him by the hand. "You're a man, Jeff, and I'll be proud of you. But reklec" he's quick on the trigger. Don't take no chance. He won't give none."

"I'll give him none," said Jeff.

"You're a boy after ail," mused the