

REMARKABLE DETECTIVE-THRILLER INSIDE!

The POPULAR

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EVERY
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2d



"ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE!"

Starring Ferrers Locke, Master Tec, in another dramatic adventure.

BE THRILLED BY OUR FINE WESTERN YARNS!

The MAN from MONTANA!

BY
RALPH
REDWAY.



The Rio Kid hits big trouble when he meets his boss' scallywag son, Frank Sanderson.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Kid In Doubt!

UNCORK it, feller!" The Rio Kid smiled faintly. But he did not heed Yuba Dick's injunction to "uncork" it. He remained silent.

Yuba Dick rolled a cigarette, offered it to the Kid, who shook his head, put it into his own mouth, scratched a match on his pants, and lighted it.

He blew out smoke with a thoughtful frown.

Yuba Dick, horse-wrangler of the Bar-One, was very friendly with the latest recruit to the bunch, and hated to see him with a grouch.

And there was no doubt that the Kid had a grouch.

He was worried.

"What's bitin' you?" asked Dick at last.

"Oh, nothin' much!" said the Kid.

"You been lookin' for two-three days like you'd lost a Texas dollar and found a Mexican cent!"

"I guess there's nothin' to it," said the Kid. "A guy can't always be cavorting around joyful like a two-year-old. Say, you ain't got them cayuses ready for the remuda yet!"

"I sure ain't!" agreed Yuba Dick. "And there sure ain't no darned hurry! But I guess you mean that my company is beginning to tire you some. You give a yap when you feel more sociable!"

And the horse-wrangler, with a grin, walked away towards the corral, leaving the Kid alone on the bench outside the Bar-One bunkhouse.

It was true that the Kid wanted to be alone.

He wanted to think; though thinking, of which he had done a whole lot lately, did not seem to cut much ice.

From where he sat he could see the porch of the Bar-One ranch-house, and Colonel Sanderson sitting in his rocker, with his feet on the rail, a cigar in the corner of his mouth, reading a letter.

The Kid's troubled glance turned often to the rancher, as he sat thinking, after his friend had left him.

Many weeks had passed since the Kid had ridden into the Kicking Mule country; never figuring on pitching his camp there for more than a few days. He had hung on in Kicking Mule to rope in Black George, the road-agent; and he had been successful; and he had gladly, though with a lingering doubt, joined the Bar-One bunch.

His life was happy at the Bar-One; and if the Kid could have forgotten

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that he was an outlaw, with a price on his head, and that a score of sheriffs in different parts of Texas were still hunting him, he would have had hardly a care in the world.

Every man in the bunch was more or less of a friend; and Yuba Dick was his special comrade; and the colonel was as good a boss as any cowpuncher could have asked for. It had seemed to the Kid too good to last; yet it was lasting.

No man in the Kicking Mule country suspected, or dreamed, that "Two-gun" Carson, of the Bar-One, was the Rio Kid, the boy outlaw of Texas. A feeling of security came to the Kid at last; but with it came a worry on his mind. It looked as if he could settle down at the Bar-One, undisturbed; that it would never be necessary for him to saddle Side-Kicker some dark night and disappear across the plains before sunrise.

The Kid asked nothing better. But if he was going to settle down at the Bar-One, he realized more and more that he couldn't do it under false colours. It irked him every day to feel that if the rancher knew who he was, his trust might be replaced by suspicion; that, if Yuba Dick knew, the cordial friendliness might vanish; that, if the bunch knew, the cheery cordiality of the bunkhouse might change to cold distrust. It had not worried the Kid, while he regarded his stay at the Bar-One as temporary. But when he considered settling down as a permanent member of the bunch, it worried him a whole lot.

"I got to spill it!" he said to himself, shaking his head. "I got to spill it!"

And he rather regretted that he had

not accepted Yuba Dick's invitation to "uncork."

But, after all, the colonel was the man he had to tell.

Mesquite Bill came out of the bunkhouse, and stared at the boy-puncher on the bench.

"Still got a grouch, hombre?" asked the foreman of the Bar-One, with a grin.

"Aw, nothin' much!" said the Kid, trying to smile. But the smile came hard.

"Say, you heard the news?" asked Mesquite.

"Nope!"

"Young Frank's coming home!"

"Young Frank?" repeated the Kid.

"The boss' son!"

"I sure remember hearing the boys mention it," assented the Kid, but not with much interest.

"I mean, he's hitting the ranch today," said the foreman. "The boss is riding out as far as Juniper to meet him and bring him in. He's sure powerful pleased that Frank is coming home. Young Frank's been away from the ranch three years!"

"I guess the boss will be pleased to see him again," agreed the Kid. "I reckon the bunch will be some pleased, too!"

He glanced rather curiously at the foreman's face. There was no sign of enthusiasm about Mesquite Bill.

From his looks, the Kid gathered that Mesquite was not so pleased as the colonel naturally would be.

"Waal, he's been away a long time," said Mesquite, "and guys change in three years, they sure do, a whole lot, feller! Mebbe young Frank will have changed!"

With a nod, the burly foreman



trapped on, leaving the Kid thinking, for the moment, not of his own doubtful position, but of the return of the boss' son, and wondering what the young man would be like. Every man in the Bar-One bunch was devoted to the boss; and, naturally, the boss' son would be popular; but Mesquite's looks and words did not indicate that Frank Sanderson was popular.

Yuba Dick came back from the corral, and the Kid spoke to him.

"Say, Dick, what sort of a hombre is the boss' son?"

Dick made a grimace.

"I guess when he lighted out from this ranch three years ago, he was some scallywag!" he said. "I reckon there mightn't have been much harm in him; but he sure was one of the boys from Oshkosh, he sure was. He painted the town redder'n a sunset on the Staked Plain; and there sure was some trouble. But I guess he was the apple of the colonel's eye all the same. And you don't want to tell the boss what you think of him when you see him."

The Kid nodded.

"Mebbe he's changed now he's older," he remarked.

"Mebbe!" said the horse-wrangler. But his look was doubtful.

The Kid was left alone again.

His thoughts soon passed from that matter to his own trouble. He rose from the bench at last, and walked towards the ranch-house.

The Kid had made up his mind.

Whether he stayed, or whether he went, he was going to tell the boss how matters stood; and if the colonel did not want the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande on the ranch, Side-Kicker was ready. The Kid was booked to ride after stray cattle that afternoon; and if he had to go, he figured that he would ride out without a word to the bunch and hit the trail for parts unknown. They would keep friendly memories of their pard Two-gun; and there was no need for them to know that they had entertained an outlaw unawares.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Kid Speaks!

COLONEL SANDERSON had finished reading his letter, and was finishing his cigar, when the Kid came up the steps of the ranch-house porch and doffed his Stetson.

The rancher gave him a smile and a nod.

He liked the handsome young puncher, and admired him for the courage and resource he had shown in cinching Black George, who had been for years the terror of the cow country. That exploit had been enough for the rancher; he had not troubled, or cared, to ask the Kid any questions about himself.

"Say, boss, if you got a few minutes to waste—" began the Kid.

"A whole lot if you want to talk," said the colonel. "I ain't riding for Juniper for two hours yet. I guess you've heard that my boy's coming home."

That was the subject uppermost in the rancher's mind.

"I've heard so, sir," said the Kid.

"I've not seen him for three years," said the rancher. His brow clouded for a moment. "I guess you'll have heard from talk in the bunkhouse that there was some trouble when he quit, Carson. But he was only a boy then—and he was a good boy at heart, I guess. The Sandersons was always white men from the toes up. If he was a piece wild, I guess boys will be boys."

"They sure will!" said the Kid,

"And I want you to meet Frank," went on the colonel.

"Me, sir?" said the Kid in surprise. "Just you!" said the colonel. "I've had letters from Frank—I've just been reading one again—and he's changed a lot. He's been working on a ranch up in Montana, and made good, like I was sure he would; and he's anxious to show that he can take a man's place on his father's ranch, that will be his some day. But—"

The Kid waited as Sanderson paused. "But if he got again among the sharps and poker guys at Kicking Mule," said Sanderson slowly, "I'd be sorry to see it. I guess I'd be glad to see him make friends with you."

"Aw, and me a cowpuncher, and him the boss' son, sir!" said the Kid, with a smile.

"That cuts no ice hyer," said Sanderson. "I know a good man when I see one, and I've had my eye on you. That hombre Yuba Dick was the wildest guy in the bunch before you hit the Bar-One; and he lost his pay at poker regular, and more'n once he's rolled home from town as mad as a hornet with rye-whisky in his inside. Now there ain't a quieter and better-behaved galoot in Kicking Mule; and I guess it's you that's done it since you made friends with him."

The Kid smiled. He wondered what the sheriffs who were hunting him would have said had they heard that he was a good influence in the bunkhouse of the Bar-One.

"I reckon you're the friend my boy wants to keep him steady," said the colonel. "I sure hope he'll take to you, and you to him, Two gun. But you came here to speak to me, and here's me chewing the rag about my own business. Shoot!"

It was difficult enough after what the rancher had said for the Kid to "shoot." But he had made up his mind, and he got on with it.

"I reckon I'm going to surprise you some, sir," he said slowly. "I reckon after you've heard what I'm going to tell you you won't want me on this hyer ranch, let alone making friends with your son."

"Can it!" said Sanderson. "You're sure dreaming."

"I wish I was, sir," said the Kid, with a sigh. "But facts is facts, and you can't ride round them. You took me on trust into your bunch, sir, and you've trusted me since; and I guess I ain't throwed you down none."

"I never took you on trust, hombre. I know a man when I see one; and the guy that rounded up Black George didn't want a lot of recommendation," grinned the rancher. "Say, what's biting you?"

"My name ain't Carson," said the Kid.

"Aw, and half the guys in Kicking Mule wasn't born under the name they put on the payroll," said Sanderson. "Is that all, you young gink?"

"My name's Carfax."

"I guess it's as good as Carson; but you can call yourself Christopher Columbus on this ranch if you want!"

"They called me Kid Carfax on the ranch along to Frio, where I was raised," said the Kid. "But the name I've been given since is the Rio Kid."

It was out now!

Colonel Sanderson sat bolt-upright in his rocker and stared at the boy puncher under his grizzled brows. Astonishment was mingled with incredulity in his bronzed, kindly face.

"What you giving me?" he demanded. "The goods, sir," answered the Kid sadly.

"The Rio Kid?"

"Sure!"

"Great snakes! You ain't stringing me along?" ejaculated the colonel.

"I wish I was, sir! I'm the Rio Kid!" said the boy puncher moodily. "I figure that you've heard the name."

"I reckon there ain't a guy in Texas that ain't heard it," said the colonel blankly. "Say, you the young firebug that's shot up more guys than he's got fingers and toes—"

"I ain't shot up all the guys they say I've shot up, sir," said the Kid, with a faint smile; "and I ain't never pulled a gun unless I was crowded. You've seen that I pack two guns, but I guess you ain't seen me using them promiscuous."

"That's a cinch," said Sanderson, still staring at the handsome, sunburnt face blankly. "But you sure get me guessing! You're the outlaw that half the sheriffs in Texas are hunting."

"Me, sir," said the Kid.

"You the firebug that the Rangers rounded up in the Mal Pais, and that beat them to it?"

"Sure!"

"Carry me home to die!" said Sanderson.

There was a long silence.

The rancher had forgotten for the moment the matter that had filled his mind, forgotten even the coming return of his son. He gazed blankly at the Rio Kid.

The Kid was quiet and earnest; but the rancher found it difficult to believe that this handsome puncher, little more than a boy, was the celebrated firebug whose name and fame were known in every cow town and camp in the Lone Star State. It was because the looks of the Rio Kid were so unlike his wild reputation that he was often able to ride in safety in regions where his name was a byword.

"Carry me home to die!" repeated Sanderson at last. "You the Rio Kid! You an outlaw! But you cinched Black George!"

"I sure did!" assented the Kid. "He was a killer, and I guessed it was time he went home. I never wanted to be an outlaw; and they know at Frio that I never did what I was driven into outlawry for. But they knew that too late to help me. It was me for the lone trail. I sure was glad, sir, to join your bunch on this ranch, but I never figured that it would last. But now—"

"What's your game in telling me?"

"I ain't staying here and deceiving you, sir," said the Kid quietly. "If you want me to stay, knowing who I am and what my reputation is, I'll stay—and joyful. If you don't want the Rio Kid around, I'm ready to ride. And I kinder guess you don't, and can't."

"I guess," said the rancher slowly, "that if I'd met the Rio Kid on the trail I'd have pulled a gun on him as quick as any man in Texas. But that cuts no ice. I know you now, hombre. I ain't believing much harm of the guy that cinched Black George, and stood by me and saved my life when I was shot up by that scallywag. No, sir! Young Frank would have come home to find his father in the Kicking Mule cemetery but for you! That's good enough for me, Carson."

"Carfax, sir," said the Kid.

"Carson!" repeated the rancher. "Carson goes! And you stay. I ain't letting you ride."

The Kid drew a deep breath.

"You know what's said of me in every cow town in Texas, sir," he said.

"I guess a whole lot of it is hot air now I know you," grinned Sanderson. "Search me! I ain't parting with a man like you!"

"You sure are a white man, sir; and it does me good to hear you talk," said the Kid gratefully. "But—"

"Cut out the 'butts,'" said the rancher decisively. "You're in my outfit, and you stay in my outfit—allowing that the sheriffs don't root you out. And I guess they won't come rubbering round the Bar-One looking for the firebug of the Rio Grande."

"But the bunch, sir—"

"The bunch know you're a good man, and they sure like you," said the rancher. "You don't want to put the bunch wise. There'd be talk, and you don't want any guy chewing the rag about the Rio Kid being here. Leave the bunch out of it. This is between you and me."

The Kid stood silent, with a lump in his throat. He had always liked and respected the boss of the Bar-One, but at this moment he would gladly have died for him.

There was another long silence, during which the rancher watched the Kid's face, understanding the emotion he read there.

"You want to forget it," said Sanderson. "You came to this ranch as Two-gun Carson, and you stay as Two-gun Carson! I'll tell the world that you're as good as any man in the outfit."

"If you trust me, sir—"

"Aw, what would you have come and told me this for, if you wasn't to be trusted?" said the rancher. "You could have kept it dark, easy. Forget it, hombre! I'm telling you that I know a white man when I see one—and you're a white man, and all they say in the cow towns won't change that. And I keep to what I said. When my boy's home I want you to be his friend, and help to keep him steady, like I know you could."

"Colonel Sanderson, sir," said the Kid, and his voice was husky, "if ever there's need for a man to be shot up for you or your son, I'm that man, and I'll be glad of the chance. I won't say no more, sir; but if you change your mind and want me to ride, I shan't take it unkindly, and I'll quit instant, and always remember you as a white man."

"I ain't the guy to change my mind," said the colonel, "and if you quit, I'll sure ride after you and rope you in, and bring you back like you was an ornery steer breakin' out of the herd."

The Kid grinned, but his eyelashes were wet.

"I'm your man, sir, and your son's friend, if he'll let me," said the Kid, "and I'm telling you, sir, that you won't ever want to be sorry for trusting me."

"I sure know that!" said Sanderson.

The Kid went down the porch, the rancher gazing after him thoughtfully.

The boy outlaw's face was bright, his heart light, as he mounted Side-Kicker and rode out on the prairie.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Meeting on the Prairie!

THE pinto looked up from cropping the grass, at the sound of hoof-beats, and laid back his ears. He was a handsome horse, and the Kid would not have figured that he was a vicious one; but the way his ears went back made the boy puncher wary. He unhooked his riata as he rode nearer to the stray animal.

The sun was dipping to the prairie in the west. The Rio Kid had had a long ride that day, hunting for the strayed steers, and had not as yet found them. Now, as night was falling, he was ten miles from the ranch, and debating in his mind whether he should ride back, or camp on the prairie, and

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resume his search for the steers at sun-up. Then he sighted the pinto.

A horse saddled and bridled, wandering alone on the plains, told only one story to the cowboy—the rider had fallen, or had been thrown, and lay somewhere stranded in the ocean of grass. The Kid had a proper contempt for a rider who fell from his horse, or allowed himself to be thrown; but that made no difference to his intentions. If some galoot was stranded on foot on the prairie, it was up to the Kid to rope in his horse for him, and find him, and see him safe on his way.

Likely enough, it was some cowboy returning from town full up with boot-leg whisky. The Kid, who never touched poison himself, did not judge others harshly. If the hapless rider of the pinto was "elevated," and therefore helpless, the Kid was ready to lend him the helping hand he needed.

The pinto was shy. As the Kid drew nearer, the animal flung up its heels and galloped. But Side-Kicker, even after a long trail, was too good for the pinto. The grey mustang, under the Kid's skilled hand, stretched himself out in pursuit, and the boy puncher was soon within roping distance. The lasso flew, the loop descended over the tossing head of the pinto, and the fugitive went to grass with sprawling heels.

The Kid rode up and dismounted. He jerked the pinto up, and the horse was quiet enough under his hand. The Kid had a way with horses.

His brow darkened as he saw the traces of cruel usage on the pinto's glossy skin. The rider had used his quirt freely—or, rather, savagely. It was no wonder that the horse had got rid of its rider when it could.

"Some durned skunk that don't know how to use a boss!" growled the Kid, and he half-changed his mind about looking for the deserted rider.

But he shook his head. A man abandoned on foot on the rolling, boundless prairie, with night coming on, was in too sore a strait for the puncher to leave him to it, even if he was some scallywag who mishandled a horse.

There was light enough for the Kid's keen eyes to pick up a trail. He soothed the pinto for a few minutes, reducing him to quiet obedience, and then remounted Side-Kicker, leading the "painted" horse on the end of his rope. He rode back to the spot where he had first seen the stray.

From that spot, by following the pinto's trail back, the Kid was bound to hit on the rider soon or late, and he lost no time.

The tracks of a riderless horse were not deep; but the faintest sign was enough for the Rio Kid. He rode at a trot, sign here and there, seen from the saddle, assuring him that he was on the right way.

The Kid was wondering who the guy might be. Some "elevated" puncher on his way home from Juniper or Kicking Mule, belonging to one of the neighboring ranches, he had figured at first. But the pinto's trappings were expensive, and the Kid reckoned that it was not a cowpuncher's horse.

But whoever the man was, the Kid meant to find him, if he could, before dark, and put him on his horse and on his way. That was the first duty of a ranchman to a stranger lost on the plains. A man on foot on the boundless prairie, might wander for days, till he sank down exhausted, and died of hunger or thirst. More than once had the Kid known of such happenings.

The sun was touching the western plains now, only a red rim showing

over the sea of grass. Shadows were thickening over the prairie. The Kid's eyes, keen as they were, found it hard to pick up sign from the saddle. He guessed that he had not much farther to ride, and he received a sudden and startling confirmation of it.

Bang!

The whizz of a bullet was followed by the roar of a six-gun.

"Sho!" ejaculated the Kid.

Twenty yards or so from him was a belt of thicket, and it was from the thicket that the shot had come. It flew yards from the Kid; it had been fired by an unsteady hand.

Instantly the Kid leaped to the ground.

Bang!

The second shot flew wider than the first.

Leaving Side-Kicker, with the lasso holding the captured horse to him, the Kid ran forward through the long grass.

There was a gun in his hand now, and a glint in his blue eyes.

From the shadowy thicket a figure lurched unsteadily. A shaking gun, in a shaking hand, was lifted.

"You dog-goned gink!" roared the Kid. "Drop it!"

"You dog-goned horse-thief!" came the answer, and the revolver steadied a little.

The Kid's gun roared, and the shaking gun was shot out of the unsteady hand that grasped it.

It went crashing away in the grass, and the Kid ran on, and his smoking revolver was jammed fairly in the face of the man who had twice fired on him.

"Put 'em up, you geck!" rapped the Kid.

The man stared at him stupidly, his face going white, and made an effort to put up his hands. As he did so, his legs failed him, and he collapsed in the grass.

"Aw!" ejaculated the Kid, in utter contempt and disgust. "Full as a boiled owl! I guess that guy had been jerking his elbow some afore he quit town."

The Kid holstered his gun.

He dropped on his knees in the grass beside the sprawling man. He knew that this was the man who had been thrown by the pinto; he had found the horse's master. The state in which he found him was a sufficient explanation of his having been thrown by the horse.

"Say, you geck, what you mean burnin' powder on a guy?" demanded the Kid indignantly.

"You durned horse-thief!" muttered the other indistinctly. "That's my pinto you've got—"

"You dirty, evil-smellin' coyote," said the Kid, in disgust. "If you wasn't as drunk as a greaser with three quarts of pulque under his belt, you'd know that I roped in your cayuse to bring it back to you, you ornery polecat!"

The man blinked at him uncertainly. "Aw, pull yourself together!" snapped the Kid. "I ain't no hoss-thief, dog-gone you, but a cowpuncher, and I've been trailing you near an hour to find you and stick you on your cayuse. Got that?"

"I get you," mumbled the other. "I reckoned when I saw you with my pinto you was a horse-thief—"

He pillowed his head on his arm and lay in the grass. The Kid, angry, disgusted, scornful, rose to his feet.

"Say, you fizen polecat!" he said.

Only a grunt answered him.

The Kid stirred the fellow vigorously with his boot. The man opened his eyes again and sat up dizzily. In the deepening darkness, the Kid could not see him clearly. Certainly he was not a cowboy, though what he was was not clear to the

Kid. The man stared and blinked at him sullenly.

"Say, get up, you scallawag," said the Kid; "I ain't leaving you here. I guess some water will help sober you!"

He fetched the can from the grey mustang, and dashed cold water in the dizzy, blinking face. It seemed to have a sobering effect on the man. He muttered a curse, and staggered to his feet, and looked blackly at his rescuer.

"Say, you able to sit a hoss?" demanded the Kid.

"I reckon."
"I'll put you on your pinto and start you. If you can't sit the critter, I guess I'll have to ride with you and hold you on," said the Kid angrily. "Get a move on!"

The man seemed to be pulling himself together now. He climbed on the unwilling pinto, the Kid holding the horse steady for him. He sat in the saddle with some steadiness, once he had found the stirrups. The Kid was glad to see it, for, though he would not have deserted a helpless man, he was far from anxious for such company.

"You O.K.?" he asked.

"Sure!"
"Then I guess you can beat it, and I'll be riding," said the Kid.

"Ride to the bottom of the deep pit, for all I care!" snarled the man on the pinto. Then he checked himself. "Say, I was sure full up when I lit out of Juniper, and I guess I've lost the trail for sure. Put me right for the Bar-One ranch."

"The Bar-One ranch!" repeated the Kid. "You aiming to hit the Bar-One?"

"Yep."
"I guess Colonel Sanderson won't be a whole lot pleased to see a galoot like you!" snapped the Kid. "You want to sober up a few more afore you hit the Bar-One."

"Forget it!" sneered the other. "I guess Colonel Sanderson will be powerful glad to see me, after missing me at Juniper!"

The Kid started a little. Colonel Sanderson, he knew, had ridden to Juniper that afternoon to meet his son there and ride back with him to the ranch. Probably he had had other business in the town, though the Kid hardly figured that a man like Sanderson would have much business with a fellow like this.

"Say, who are you?" demanded the Kid.

"Find out!" was the sullen answer. The Kid peered at him; but in the gloom he could make out only a shadow. He felt for his matchbox, struck a match, and held it up. The flickering flame glimmered on the face of a man of about twenty-five—a rather handsome but reckless and dissipated face. And it was a face that was known to the Rio Kid.

"Ace-High Sanders!" he ejaculated. The man on the pinto swore. "Dog-gone you, you've been in Montana?"

"I been in Montana," said the Kid contemptuously, "and I seen you boosted out of a saloon for cheating at cards, you pizen skunk! Ace-High Sanders was what you was called there, you tinhorn polecat! Yep! What you doin' in Texas, and what you mean by

saying that my boss was aiming to meet you in Juniper?"

"Your boss?"
"Colonel Sanderson's my boss."
"Say, you belong to the Bar-One bunch?"

"You've said it."
"You're a new man, then, or I'd know you." The man on the pinto peered

son of the rancher who was so keenly awaiting the return of the prodigal!

It almost stunned the Kid. Gladly he would have doubted it; gladly he would have given the man the lie, and dashed his clenched fist in the dissipated face. But he knew that it was true. The boss of the Bar-One hoped, and believed, that his son had

The Kid's gun roared.



"made good" in the cow country up north; and the waster had led him to hope and believe so. But this chance meeting on the prairie told the Kid what Colonel Sanderson did not suspect—that the prodigal of the Bar-One was returning a worse man than he had gone.

It made the Kid's heart sick. "Say, you seem struck all of a heap!" jeered the man on the pinto. "You ain't put me wise yet for the ranch."

The Kid made an effort. His dislike of the man was intense. His contempt for him penetrated to the very marrow of his bones. But he was the son of the Kid's friend and benefactor, and the Kid crushed down his feelings with iron determination.

Ace-High Sanders, the swindling sharper of Montana, must be forgotten; the best that he could make of the colonel's son should be made of him. The colonel believed that his son had made good; and the Kid would never be the one to undeceive him.

"I'll guide you to the ranch, sir!" said the Kid, with a change of manner and tone that made the man on the pinto start and peer at him again. "I was sure thinking of riding back when I hit on your cayuse."

"Get on your cayuse, then, feller!" The Rio Kid mounted the grey mustang.

He led the way, and they rode for some miles in silence. Frank Sanderson seemed to be recovering more and more, and the Kid was glad to see him sitting the pinto steadily. At least he would be sober when he reached the Bar-One and met his father.

It was the man from Montana who broke the silence:

"Say, you!"

down at the Kid. "Say, darn you, if you're on the Bar-One, you'd better keep a civil tongue when you're chewing the rag with me. Get that?"

"And why?" said the Kid disdainfully.

And then, with a sudden rush of understanding, it came to him. He stepped towards the man on the pinto and grasped him by the arm. His voice was deep and tense as he spoke.

"Who are you? You was Ace-High Sanders up in Montana, a tinhorn gambler and poker sharp. Who are you?"

"You want to forget that if you keep on at the Bar-One," sneered the man on the pinto. "I'm Frank Sanderson—Colonel Sanderson's son!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Kid Keeps a Secret!
THE Rio Kid stood still.

He stood silent and still, as though the words had turned him to stone.

The boss' son!
This waster—this pesky scallawag the

"Sir?" said the Kid.
"You're new in the bunch?"

"Only a few weeks, sir."

"I guess you've changed your tone a whole lot since you're wise to it that I'm your boss' son!" sneered Sanderson.

"Sure, sir," answered the Kid; respectfully respectful.

"The colonel is a man respected in the whole section; and he's a good boss to me, and a white man from the toes up! I'd like to respect his son as much as himself!"

"You ain't talking about what you know, at the ranch?" muttered the other. "The colonel don't know—"

"I ain't saying a word, sir."

The young man peered at him.

"I guess I don't want it chewed in the bunk-house," he said. "I'll tell you this, puncher, I'm going home to make

good. I never meant to get full at Juniper, and if I'd let the tanglefoot alone, I'd have waited for my father and ridden home with him. Look here, keep your mouth shut, and forget that you ever saw a man in Montana named Ace-High Sanders, and I'll make it worth your while."

"I'm keeping my mouth shut, sir, for the colonel's sake, and your sake," said the Kid quietly. "You don't want to figure that I'm going to chew the rag in the bunk-house about what don't concern me. I've forgotten all about Ace-High Sanders already."

Sanderson laughed.

"Keep to that!" he said.

"You've said it, sir."

They rode on in silence again. When

the lights of the ranch-house came in sight across the dark prairie they separated. Evidently Frank Sanderson did not wish it to be known how the Kid had found him on the prairie, and the Kid understood.

Sanderson rode on to the ranch and disappeared.

After waiting a little the Rio Kid rode on more slowly. His heart was heavy for the boss of the Bar-One.

THE END.

(Never before has the Rio Kid been placed in such an unpleasant position as this. How does he get out of it? See next week's roaring long complete tale of the Wild West, entitled: "THE SCALLYWAG OF THE BAR-ONE!" starring the Rio Kid, boy outlaw!)

HOW TO PRODUCE A SHADOW SHOW!

A BRIGHT WHEEZE TO WORK AT YOUR NEXT PARTY OR SCOUT DISPLAY

THE START.

FOR parties or Boy Scout displays, shadow shows will afford great enjoyment, and they can be produced at no expense.

Actually, all that is required to work one of these "shows" is a sheet and a lamp.

To start with, hang the sheet up in a room, with your audience sitting in front of it, leaving at the back of the sheet a fair-sized space wherein you are to perform. On the ground place a lamp which will throw a good light on the sheet, and remember that the part of the room where your audience are sitting must be in darkness. The only light will be from the lamp, which must be about ten feet or twelve feet away from the sheet. If you stand between the light and the sheet your shadow naturally will appear on the latter.

When you are close up to the sheet the audience see you at your ordinary height, but as you move backwards you seem to be getting larger and larger, until you look like a giant, and finally, by jumping over the lamp you appear to have gone right through the ceiling.

THE PLAY.

Now to commence: Jump over the light and come down to the sheet slowly and sideways, bowing (apparently) to your audience on the other side of the sheet, and then you are all ready to commence. Supposing you make up your mind to play a little Harlequinade—say a clown, a pantaloon; other of your friends as a policeman, a swell, a young lady, and so on—you can make a show last a good hour or more. There is no speaking by the characters, and if you can induce one of your friends to play some music while you are performing, so much the better. You can make yourself look like a clown, etc., by using some old clothes. Anything will do as long as you can convey to your audience what you are representing, for remember you will not be seen, *only your shadows*. Everything being now ready, we start.

Clown jumps over light and comes down, bowing in a very extravagant manner. In a moment something is thrown over the light, which the clown catches and, holding it up broadside to the sheet, the audience read the words: "Here we are again!" This is done by getting an ordinary sheet of cardboard and cutting out the words in it, so that when you hold it up the words stand out in *silhouette*. Having shown it, you throw it back, when it looks to have gone up through the ceiling. Next appears the pantaloon in the same way (over the light), also bowing to the audience as the clown did. He also has a piece of cardboard thrown to him, and on holding it up everybody reads the words: "Good-evening everybody!" He also throws this back, and then shakes hands with the clown. The latter then commences to whisper to the pantaloon, during which a policeman walks on from the side (*not over the light*), with a baton in his hand (made with thick brown paper), which he shakes at both of them. They at once begin to shake with fear, but suddenly turning round they both catch hold of the policeman, running him in the direction of the light, when he jumps over it, the effect

to the audience being as though they had thrown him up aloft. Now a swell walks on from one side and a young lady from the other, and they commence to bill and coo, the clown and the pantaloon standing back and mimicking them.

The pantaloon puts his hand towards the swell's pocket and commences to draw out a long string of sausages; meanwhile, the clown is making love to the young lady, who finally jumps over the light, waving her arms as though she was screaming.

The sausages can be made by filling some small paper bags with shavings to represent them and then tie them together like a string of them; about twelve would do.

The swell is annoyed and commences to square up to the clown for a fight. This will cause roars of laughter if properly worked. First of all, you are both close up to the sheet sparring at one another for a moment or two; then the swell commences to move towards the light, sideways, still sparring, when it looks as if the clown was sparring at a giant; swell then moves down again to his normal size, when the clown starts moving towards the light, practically reversing the procedure. This can be done two or three times, *but don't overdo it*. Finally, clown gives swell a terrible (?) blow, when he falls down as though he had the knock-out. The pantaloon now brings on something to lay swell on, and which must be slightly raised from the ground (a couple of boxes would do). They then lift him on to this little platform, and then the clown brings forward a large jug of water (or filled with sawdust would do); meanwhile, the pantaloon has placed a small pail behind where the swell is lying, but it must be unperceived by the audience. The reason for this you will notice in a moment. The clown now has a large funnel thrown over the light to him, this being simply cut from a piece of cardboard in imitation of a funnel, the pantaloon holding the end *apparently* over the mouth of the swell as he is lying there, but in reality over the concealed pail. The clown proceeds to take up the jug and empty the contents into the funnel. To the audience it looks as though it was being poured into the mouth of the swell, when in reality it all goes into the pail.

SCREENING THE LIGHT.

From the foregoing my readers can form a very good idea of the groundwork of a shadow entertainment, and should they be of an inventive turn of mind a thousand-and-one things can suggest themselves which will very materially add to the fun of the evening.

Where possible, the sheet should be the width of the room, and touching the ground so that none of the audience can see under it. Where it is not convenient to have such a large sheet a smaller one would do with a screen on either side so as to prevent anyone from peeping round.

The lamp must throw a good strong light (a powerful cycle lamp will do), and stand it on a small box about a foot high. Don't use an oil lamp, in case of the excitement in performing, and as you are jumping you might knock it over and so cause a fire. Be sure whenever you jump over the light to keep your legs wide apart, as that will prevent your touching the lamp.