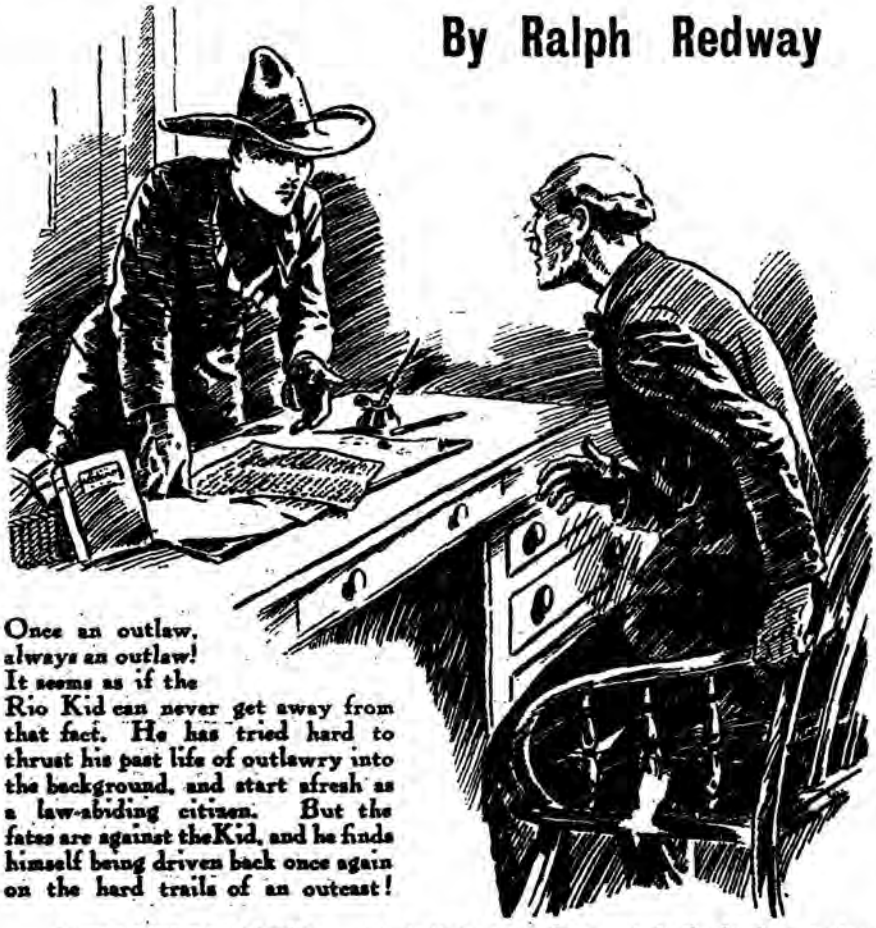
THERE'S MANY A THRILL AND SURPRISE IN THIS POWERFUL TALE OF WESTERN ADVENTURE!

DRIVEN OFF HIS RANCH!

By Ralph Redway



Once an outlaw, always an outlaw! It seems as if the Rio Kid can never get away from that fact. He has tried hard to thrust his past life of outlawry into the background, and start afresh as a law-abiding citizen. But the fates are against the Kid, and he finds himself being driven back once again on the hard trails of an outcast!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
The Blow Falls!

THUD! Thud! Thud!

The beat of galloping hoofs was no unusual sound on the Lazy O ranch. The Rio Kid heard the rapid hoof-strokes as he stood at the gate of the corral, but he did not heed them.

"Mister Fairfax," boss of the Lazy O, was a busy man that morning. Long Bill, the horse-wrangler, was on a day's leave to Packsaddle, with several of the bunch. There was to be a round-up of cattle on a distant range that day, and Mister Fairfax was picking out horses for the remuda. Mister Fairfax had almost forgotten for the moment that he had ever been known as the Rio Kid, and that Barney Baker, the foreman of the Lazy O, knew it, and had left the ranch to tell all Texas where the outlaw of the Rio Grande was to be found.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

The Kid did not turn his head. Only for a few weeks had the Kid been ranching the Lazy O, but he had become so much a rancher that his past days of outlawry seemed more like a dream than a reality. The Kid asked nothing better than to be left alone to run his ranch; to ride Side-Kicker on a peaceful range, and to play the waiting

butted guns a long rest in the leather holsters. And if, at the back of his mind, he knew that it was not to be, he was not thinking of that now. Picking out cayuses for the remuda, the boss of the Lazy O gave his attention to the matter in hand, and gave no heed to the galloping hoof-beats approaching till one of the punchers called out:

"Say, here's Long Bill humping back."

Then the Kid turned his head.

Out on the plain, approaching the ranch at a furious gallop, were four riders, strung out in a panting line. They were the four men to whom the Kid had given leave that morning to ride into Packsaddle, and they were coming back to the ranch at frantic speed.

The Kid fixed his eyes on them.

Long Bill, the horse-wrangler, was riding ahead of the rest, driving on his broncho with quirt and spur. The Kid's keen eyes picked out a streak of crimson across the wrangler's bronzed cheek, where a bullet had grazed.

"Gee!" murmured the Kid.

He forgot the remuda now, and the intended round-up on the range. He knew that there was something more pressing on hand.

The Lazy O ranchers gathered in a group, staring at the approaching horsemen. Something had happened to stop Long Bill and his companions on their way to the cow-town, and there had been gun-play on the prairie. The Kid's keen eyes, looking past the furious riders, discerned bobbing Stetsons far away on the plain, and knew that the four were pursued. More than a dozen riders, he figured, were coming on at a distance behind the quartet.

The Kid's face set hard.

Ever since Barney Baker had lit out from the ranch the Kid had looked for trouble. He knew now that it had come.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Long Bill came thundering up on a foaming broncho. He dragged in his steed near the corral, so sharply that the animal almost rolled on its haunches, and leaped down.

"They're coming!" he gasped.

The Kid looked at him coolly.

"Say, what's the excitement?" he drawled. "Who's coming?"

"Jake Nixon, the sheriff of White Pine and his posse!" panted Long Bill.

"Sho!"

The Kid stood very still.

He had figured that it was to come, and now it had come. The game of Mister Fairfax, the boss of the Lazy O, was played out, and it was time for the Rio Kid to hit the trail once more. He had expected it, he had known that it must come, yet now it had come it was a heavy blow.

For once the colour wavered in the cheeks of the boy outlaw. There was no fear in his heart, fear was unknown to the Kid. It was not that! It was the end of his dream of a new life, a peaceful and law-abiding life on his own ranch; that was what hit the Kid.

There was a burst of exclamations from the Lazy O punchers standing round their boss.

"Jake Nixon?"

"What'll he want at the Lazy O?"

"What's his game here? This ain't White Pine country! Jake Nixon ain't no business in Packsaddle."

The Kid did not speak. His eyes were on the distant Stetsons bobbing over the grass.

Long Bill's companions came panting up and dismounted. There was a buzz of excited voices round the silent boss of the Lazy O.

"Say, boss!" exclaimed Long Bill. "I guess you know what it means! Say, this here bunch is standing for you."

The Kid looked at him with a faint smile.

Every man on the Lazy O knew, or guessed, who the boss really was. They had laughed at Barney Baker when he told them, yet the fact had dawned on their minds. The Lazy O bunch

did not need the coming of the sheriff of White Pine to put them wise.

"Barney Baker was with that outfit!" said the wrangler, jerking his thumb towards the distant riders. "Say, boss, Barney's been to White Pine, or sent word there, and Jake Nixon is wise to you. But Barney won't see the rookus!" added the wrangler grimly.

"What's come to Barney?" asked the Kid quietly.

Long Bill tapped the gash on his cheek.

"Barney pulled his gun," he said. "I guess he didn't want us to come back and put you wise, boss. I guess he spilled a lot of lead—before he got his!"

"He got his?" repeated the Kid.

"You bet! I reckon there ain't anything left of Barney, 'cept for the buzzards," said Long Bill. "I got him fair and square."

"Barney's dead?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"I should smile," answered Long Bill. "He pulled first, and I guess his lead went close." He touched the gash again. "You-all won't see Barney Baker any more. He's gone up."

The Kid hardly heeded. Whether Barney lived or died cut no ice now. He had told what he knew, and that he had been believed was proved by the fact that the sheriff of White Pine was on the trail. It was with the White Pine outfit that Mister Fairfax had to deal.

The Kid looked round at the bunch.

He had come to the Lazy O only a few short weeks ago as the new boss, disliked and defied by the wildest bunch in Packsaddle. He had tamed that wild bunch, and made good at the ranch. They had learned to respect him at first, and then to like him, and now he—— Every look, every word, showed that the bunch were standing for him. There was a gun in every hand, and grim looks were cast towards the distant riders. They knew that he was the Rio Kid, as well as if he had told them so, they knew that there was a reward of a thousand dollars on his head. But they stood for him.

"We're standing for you, boss," said Long Bill. "Say, sir, I ain't put it to you afore, but I guess we want the cards on the table now. Barney Baker allowed that you was the Rio Kid, sir—and I guess the sheriff thinks the same, or he wouldn't be here."

"Barney Baker was giving you the straight goods," said the Kid evenly, "I guess I'm the man they want."

"The Rio Kid!" said Shorty, with a deep breath.

They had guessed it; they had known it; but it gave them a thrill to hear it from the boss' own lips.

"Sure," said the Kid quietly. "And I'll tell you'uns that the Rio Kid ain't the all-fired scallywag that folks allow. I guess I bought this ranch fair and square, with dollars I made in the Arizona gold mines, and I guess you-'uns have found me a square man."

"You bet!"

"You've said it. Mister Fairfax."

"I reckoned it was too good to last," said the Kid, with a sigh. "I guessed it was coming to me—and it's sure come. But it's been good while it lasted, and I ain't got no kick coming. I'll be powerful sorry to leave all you boys—we was getting on fine. But I reckon it's me for the trail."

"Forget it!" snapped Long Bill. "You ain't hitting the trail any, boss! You're freezing on to this ranch and this bunch."

"Why, we won't let you go, sir!" exclaimed Long Bill. "We know a white man when we see one; and we're standing for you. Shucks! There's more'n one guy in this bunch that hit Packsaddle because other parts of Texas was unhealthy for him. We don't want no sheriffs cavortin' around hyer."

The Kid stood silent.

He had picked the Packsaddle section to locate when he began his new life, because it was a section where sheriffs did not love to ride. There was little law in Packsaddle, save the law of the Colt.

The Kid had figured that even if the worst came, there was a chance for him in a country like Packsaddle. The town marshal was his friend; and the sheriff down at Pecos Bend had long since learned that Packsaddle was best left alone. A White Pine outfit had no right to ride Packsaddle trails. The Kid looked over the bunch. There were twenty good men at hand, and a dozen or more out on the ranges.

A gleam came into his eyes.

The ranch was his own, bought with dollars hard won. The bunch stood for him. If there was a ghost of a chance of holding on, instead of riding once more an outlaw trail, it was worth while.

"You hear me shout!" exclaimed the wrangler. "I tell you, boss, we ain't letting you ride. This bunch is standing for you! Say, half the guys in Packsaddle have run from sheriffs up and down Texas. I guess Jake Nixon has bit off more'n he can chew this time. This bunch is going to show him that he can't get away with it."

"You've said it!" chuckled Shorty.

"Stand for it, boss, and this bunch will back your play till the cows come home!" said Long Bill eagerly. "Why, dog-gone my cats, didn't Barney Baker hold this ranch for years agin the owners, and the sheriffs never worried him any. Sheriffs don't go in Packsaddle. You ain't hitting the trail, boss; you are sure freezing on to the Lazy O?"

The Kid nodded.

"I sure am!" he said.

"That's the music!" said Long Bill, with satisfaction, and there was a shout of approval from the bunch.

The die was cast!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Face to Face!

JAKE NIXON'S eyes, deep-set under shaggy brows, gleamed as he rode up to the ranch-house. Behind the sheriff of White Pine rode more than a dozen men, armed to the teeth.

Trampling hoofs rang before the porch of the Lazy O. On the porch stood the handsome figure of Mister Fairfax, boss of the ranch, and round about him were a score of men, and every man was packing a gun.

It was upon Mister Fairfax that Jake's eyes were fixed as he drew rein before the house.

He had doubted whether Barney Baker had told him the truth. He had ridden from White Pine on the chance. But now that he saw the Rio Kid, he knew. The little moustache that changed the Kid's looks did not deceive a man who knew his face as well as he knew his own. Dark and grim grew the sheriff's visage. Only a few months ago the Rio Kid had been very nearly cinched in White Pine; and he had fought his way out of the town, gun in and once more his phenomenal luck had held good, and he had made the grade.

He had left a bullet in Jake's leg to remind him of the Rio Kid—and Jake had not forgotten. Every time he limped on his game leg Jake cursed the Rio Kid, and longed for a chance to cinch the fire-bug of the Rio Grande. And now his chance had come, at long last.

Barney Baker lay on the prairie, the prey of buzzard and coyote, but his revenge was in the hands of the sheriff of White Pine.

The Kid looked down coolly on the group of horsemen. He raised his Stetson with mocking politeness to the sheriff.

"Say, Jake, you're sure a long ways from White Pine!" he greeted.

Jake's eyes glinted at him.

"I'm come for you, Kid!" he said.

The Kid raised his eyebrows.

"I guess you're speaking to Mister Fairfax, boss of the Lazy O ranch, Jake," he answered gently.

"I'm sure speaking to the Rio Kid, the fire-bug that's wanted all over Texas!" answered Nixon grimly.

"You reckon?" asked the Kid.

Jake gave a gruff laugh.

"Aw, come off!" he said. "You figure that I don't know you, Kid? I guess your picture is posted up in White Pine, and every galoot in this outfit is wise to you. You've growed a moustache since you shot-up White Pine, but that don't cut no ice. You're the Kid!"

"I guess I ain't answering to any name but Fairfax," said the boss of the Lazy O. "Say, if this here is a friendly visit, you all are sure welcome on this ranch!"

"We're after you, Kid!"

There was a growl from the Lazy O punchers.

"Forget it!" growled Long Bill.

"I guess you'uns want to hit the trail," said Shorty, "and you want to hit it pronto! This ranch ain't healthy for sheriffs!"

"Say, Jake," said the Rio Kid softly, "you're sure off'n your beat, feller. White Pine writs don't run in Packsaddle!"

"They sure don't!" said Long Bill.

"There's a town marshal to Packsaddle, and you can sure leave it to him if you get an idea that the Rio Kid's around," said the boss of the Lazy O, in the same gentle tone.

Jake gave a snort.

"I guess you got the marshal of Packsaddle in your pocket!" he jeered. "Packsaddle's fuller of fire-bugs that hev run from the law than a Mexican dog is of fleas!"

"That needn't worry White Pine!" said the Kid. "There's a sheriff down to Pecos Bend, if you ain't satisfied with our marshal. You hit Pecos Bend and put it up to the sheriff of Pecos County!"

Another snort from Jake.

"I guess I'm wise to that guy," he said. "The sheriff of Pecos County don't horn into Packsaddle any; I guess he's sure afeared to ride within ten miles of that burg!"

The Kid laughed.

"I'm teaching you the law, Jake," he answered. "You ain't nary any right to ride over the county border; but in Packsaddle you ain't anybody but Jake Nixon, an ornery ugly guy with a game leg! You want to ride off'n this ranch without giving trouble!"

The sheriff of White Pine gritted his

teeth. If the point of law was doubtful, there was one thing that was not doubtful; Jake was not letting up on the elusive Kid now that he had him face to face.

The Kid's face was cool and smiling, but his heart was heavy. He did not want gun-play on the Lazy O. He wanted to be left in peace, to be given his chance of leading a new and peaceful life. Left alone from outside, he could yet make the grade. The marshal of Packsaddle was his friend; the sheriff of Pecos County knew that his days would not be long if he meddled with the refugees from the law who congregated in Packsaddle.

Barney Baker had known it, too, when he dragged in the White Pine sheriff, who had a personal feud with the Rio Kid. If the White Pine outfit rode away in peace the Kid saw a chance of a clear trail ahead.

But there was little chance of that. Right or wrong, within the law or outside it, Jake Nixon meant business.

There was a short silence, and the horsemen from White Pine sat their saddles with grim faces, gun in hand—and in the Lazy O bunch every hand grasped a Colt. The struggle, if it came, would be a deadly one.

Jake Nixon broke the silence.

"Chewing the rag doesn't cut no ice, Kid!" he said. "I'm here for you, and I guess you're going back with us to White Pine!"

"You got another guess coming!" said the Kid.

"You want to step down off'n that porch and give yourself up to the law!" said Jake.

The Kid laughed.

"I guess I'm here for you, dead or alive, Kid!" said the sheriff of White Pine hoarsely. "That's your choice!"

"Forget it!" said the Kid.

Jake's hand was on his gun. All eyes were upon him and the Kid.

"Don't!" said the Kid softly. "If you handle your hardware, Jake, there will sure be bad trouble."

"You giving up?"

"Not by a jugful."

"Dead or alive, kid——"

"Forget it!" said the Kid.

The sheriff of White Pine said no more. His gun came from its holster. In a flash the Kid's gun was levelled at the hard, grim, bearded man from White Pine.

"Drop it, Jake!"

The sheriff's revolver was half raised. He glared at the long-barrelled Colt that looked him in the face. Round him his men handled their guns—and the Lazy O punchers stood finger on trigger. There was a breathless pause as the sheriff checked his rising hand.

"Ride, hombre, ride!" said the Kid quietly.

Jake Nixon set his teeth.

"You or me, Kid!"

His gun came up. But the Rio Kid fired first, and the sheriff of White Pine went backwards in his saddle, and crashed to the earth, his bullet whizzing away harmlessly over the roof of the ranch-house as he fell.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
The End of His Rope.

THE roar of a score of Colts followed the fall of the White Pine sheriff.

Men were firing on all sides.

The die was cast now, with a vengeance. Jake Nixon lay by the trampling hoofs of his horse; and his men were firing—and the Lazy O bunch were not slow to respond. Guns flashed and roared, and streaming smoke filled the air. Horses neighed and squealed and trampled wildly as the whizzing lead flew.

But the advantage was with the Lazy O bunch. The fire was wild from the men on the backs of the excited, cavorting horses—and they were in the minority.

For a minute or two it lasted, and then the White Pine outfit were riding for the plains.

They dashed away from the ranch-house, in a storm of whizzing bullets. Five or six of them clung to their horses; and one of them had pitched from his broncho, and did not stir again.

Clatter, clatter, clatter rang the hoof-beats as the outfit careered away.

"Let up, you'uns!" rapped out the Kid.

The bunch would have rained bullets on the fleeing outfit, and but for the Kid's sharp order few of the men from White Pine would have escaped the fire.

But at the Kid's orders the punchers ceased at once to burn powder.

"I guess they got all they want!" grinned Long Bill, as he lowered his smoking revolver.

"You've said it!" chuckled Shorty.

"They was sure asking for it," said Mexican Dave. "They can tell the guys in White Pine that Packsaddle trails ain't healthy for sheriffs!"

The White Pine outfit went careering down the trail, to halt at a safe distance from the ranch. Out of effective pistol-range, they pulled in their horses, evidently unwilling to retreat farther, but at a loss to know what move to make. They were outnumbered by the Lazy O bunch, and only their rapid retreat had saved them from being riddled with bullets. But they sat in their saddles, looking back at the ranch, with grim and savage faces, gun in hand.

The Rio Kid glanced round at the punchers.

Several of them had been hit, but no man of the Lazy O had gone down. The firing had been fierce, but it had been wild, and it had not lasted long.

Near the gate on the trail lay a White Pine man, motionless. And before the porch lay the sheriff, groaning.

The Kid stepped to him.

Jake Nixon glared at the boy outlaw, and made a motion with his gun-hand. The Kid stooped and jerked the revolver from his grasp, and tossed it away.

"I reckon you done with that, Jake," he remarked.

"You've beat me to it, Kid!" muttered Nixon. "Dog-gone you, you've beat me to it!"

"I reckon!" assented the Kid.

"I guess you won't get away with it none!" muttered the sheriff of White Pine. "This ain't the end, Kid."

The Kid made no answer.

"You got me," breathed Jake. "But when they hear of this at White Pine you'll sure get your ticket for soup, dog-gone you, you durned firebug!"

"You sure do shoot off your mouth a whole lot, Jake," answered the Kid coolly. "I guess you want to save your breath, feller."

"Dog-gone you——"

"Can it!" said the Kid curtly. "I guess if I wasn't a dog-gone gink I'd sure put a bullet through your cabeza now, and White Pine would want a new sheriff."

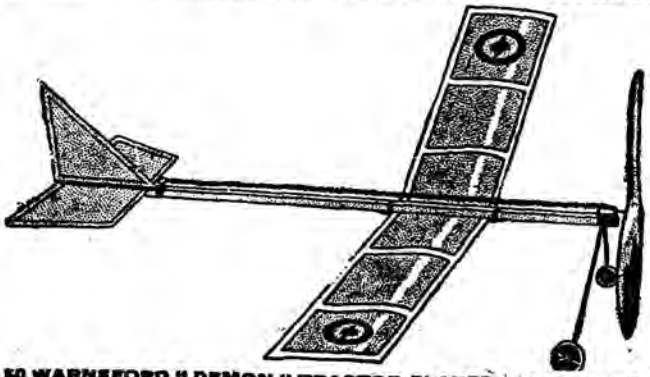
"I ain't asking you to let up!" snarled Jake. "Shoot, you all-fired scallywag, and be durned!"

The Rio Kid dropped his gun into the holster.

"Say, boss," called out Long Bill. "Them guys ain't hitting the trail. I guess we want to boot them off'n this hyer ranch!"

"You've said it," agreed the Kid. "Git your cayuses."

There was a rush to the corral. The Lazy O bunch were eager to come to conclusions with the White Pine outfit.



50 WARNEFORD "DEMON" TRACTOR PLANES. Length 25½ in. span 23 in. Fitted with 10-in. hand-carved and balanced propeller, patent double-bearing and shock-proof chassis, covered with yellow proof silk, with identification discs. Weight and wind resistance are reduced to a minimum in this splendid model, giving the utmost duration of flight.

These are the
CHRISTMAS PRESENTS
offered to readers who are successful in our
"MOTOR-PICS" COMPETITION
which will be found on page 11 of this issue.

6 "BOWMAN" MODEL STEAM L... WITH RAILS. Length of engine 10½ brass with Bowman safety valve. Sc... frames. Wheels of turned cast steel, w... RU...

STANDING BY THE KID! "You or me, Kid!" said Jake Nixon. His gun came up. But the Rio Kid fired first, and the sheriff of White Pine went backwards in his saddle. The next moment the roar of a score of Colts followed the fall of the sheriff, and men were firing on all sides. *(See Chapter 2.)*

The Kid dropped on his knee beside the sheriff, and examined his wound. It was serious enough; the bullet had passed clear through the broad chest. But Jake was not a dead man yet.

"I guess you ain't a gone coon, Jake," said the Kid. "I reckon I'll fix you up afore I clear your guys off'n this ranch."

"I ain't asking——"

"Aw, can it!" interrupted the Kid.

He called to Diego, and with the chore man's help, carried the sheriff into the ranch.

There Jake was placed on the Kid's own bed, and the Kid bound up his wound.

The sheriff, almost fainting with loss of blood, eyed him grimly and savagely as he did so.

"What's this game, Kid?" he muttered. "I'm telling you I'm after your scalp, and if you let up on me I ain't letting up on you, not by long chalks!"

The Kid left him without replying.

Outside the ranch-house he mounted Side-Kicker. The Lazy O bunch were on their bronchos now, eager to be led against the outfit halted on the plain.

"I guess White Pine guys won't be honing to ride Packsaddle trails, arter we're through with that crowd," said Long Bill.

"They sure will not!" said Shorty.

"Hit the trail!" said the Kid.

He rode down the trail, followed by the bunch, heading direct for the White Pine outfit.

There was a spattering of shots from the White Pine men, and the Lazy O riders fired in response, but the distance was too great, so far, for effective shooting.

"I guess they ain't standing to it!" said Long Bill.

The horse-wrangler was right.

With more than a score of punchers riding down on them, the dozen men from White Pine figured that it was not good enough. There was a further spattering of shots; but they turned their horses and rode away across the prairie.

"They're beating it!" grinned Shorty.

"Give them a send-off!" roared Long Bill.

The Lazy O bunch put spurs to their bronchos and dashed in pursuit. The White Pine outfit were soon at the gallop.

after them; and from the riders ahead came return fire; but the lead whizzed wide. The fight was over, and Jake Nixon's men were in full retreat.

For several miles the Lazy O bunch followed them across the prairie, till the Kid gave the word at last to return to the ranch. The sheriff's men were gone; the trouble, for the moment, was over.

The bunch rode back to the ranch in a mood of uproarious triumph and glee.

They had beaten off the White Pine outfit; and they figured that White Pine would leave Packsaddle alone after that lesson. And if they came again the bunch were ready for gunplay.

But the Kid's face was grave when he turned Side-Kicker into the corral, and went back to the ranch-house.

Jake Nixon had said that it was not the end; and the Rio Kid knew that it could not be.

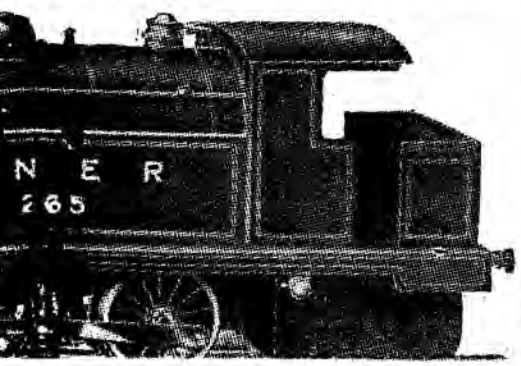
Before sundown that day the whole section would be talking of the fracas; the whole valley of the Pecos would know that Mister Fairfax, of the Lazy O ranch, was the Rio Kid.

The secret was out, and the game was up.

There had been a chance, a faint chance, the Kid figured, if Jake and his men had gone in peace. But the shooting put paid to that. A man had been killed at the Lazy O. Half the White Pine outfit had ridden away sorely wounded. It could not end there.

The Kid went to the room where the sheriff of White Pine lay in his band-

LOCOMOTIVES, Tank Type, Model 265, COMPLETE ½ in. weight 2½ lbs. The boiler is of seamless drawn solid drawn brass cylinders. Heavy gauge steel plate with steel axles. Filling funnel, oil and full instructions. UNS FOR 1½ MILES.



ages. He looked down gloomily on the wounded man, whose white face told of nothing but bitter animosity.

"You got me, dog-gone you!" Jake muttered. "But you're at the end of your rope hyer, Kid, and I'm telling you so."

"I guess I'm wise to that, Jake," answered the Kid quietly. "Gol-darn you, you couldn't stand pat and let a galoot alone."

"Not in your lifetime," said Jake, between his teeth. "Put a bullet through me if you want, you durned fire-bug! I guess you'll have half Texas buzzing round you like hornets in three days from now."

"Sure!" said the Kid.

"Your game's up!" snarled Jake.

"I reckon," assented the Kid quietly. "I've done all a guy could to quit the outlaw trail; but I reckon I've got another guess coming. When the news of this rookus spreads, I guess I'll have the Texas Rangers coming for me."

"You sure will!" said Jake savagely. "And your durned bunch won't stand long agin the Rangers."

"I guess I'd stand to it," said the Kid. "But I ain't getting the bunch shot up on my account. No, sir. I reckoned I'd get off the outlaw trail, and run a ranch; but there ain't nothing to it. I guess I knowed all along, at the back of my mind, that there wasn't nothing to it." The Kid sighed. "The game's up here, and it's me for the plains and the chaparral."

"And me lying here shot up, while you get away," muttered Jake.

The Kid smiled faintly.

"You're durned lucky to be lying here, Jake, instead of getting planted," he said. "I guess I'm sending you away in the chuck-wagon, Jake, and when you're mended, if you want the Rio Kid, you'll want to hunt for him in the chaparral, or the sierra. The Rio Kid's done with ranching. And I guess there's heap plenty galoots in Texas will be sorry he was driven to the outlaw trail agin."

Under the sunset that day the chuck-wagon rolled away from the Lazy O, with the wounded sheriff of White Pine lying in it on a heap of blankets.

In the Lazy O bunkhouse there was rejoicing and hilarity. But while the bunch celebrated their victory the Kid was riding Side-Kicker over the ranges with a clouded, thoughtful face, and an ache in his heart. "Mister Fairfax" was taking a silent farewell of the Lazy O Ranch.

— —

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
The Last of the Lazy O!

"THE Rio Kid!"

"It's sure the Kid!"

"Gee-whiz!"

Men crowded to stare as a horseman rode into the street of Pecos Bend.

The Kid rode on his way, unheeding.

No hand was raised against him; no man reached for a gun. But all Pecos Bend crowded to stare at Mister Fairfax, owner of the Lazy O Ranch, now known to be the outlaw of the Rio Grande.

It was the biggest sensation Pecos Bend had ever known as the outlaw rancher rode down the street, and stopped at the door of Lawyer Lucas' office.

There the Kid dismounted, and threw Side-Kicker's reins over a post. He paused in the doorway of the lawyer's office, to glance at the buzzing crowd, with a faintly-amused smile on his lips.

"The Rio Kid!"

The well-known name passed from mouth to mouth. Every eye was fixed on the handsome, sunburnt face.

The Kid looked over the buzzing throng, coolly, quietly, and then stepped into the lawyer's office.

Lawyer Lucas rose from his rocker, an apprehensive look on his sharp face as he stared at his visitor.

The Kid smiled.

"You don't want to get scared, feller," he said lightly. "It ain't the Rio Kid that's come to see you, it's Mister Fairfax, of the Lazy O. You get me?"

"I get you, Mister Fairfax," said the Pecos Bend lawyer. "But the whole section's saying that you're the Rio Kid."

"I guess they got it right," drawled the Kid.

"They say that word's been sent to the Texas Rangers to ride for the Lazy O," said Lucas, eyeing him curiously.

"Sure!" said the Kid. "But the Rangers won't find Mister Fairfax at the Lazy O. But I guess I got no time to waste, Mister Lucas. I'm here on business. You sold me the Lazy O Ranch, feller."

"That's so—not knowing that you was the Rio Kid——"

"Cut that out," said the Kid. "You sold me the Lazy O, and the ranch is mine, fair and square. But I guess that ranch won't be much use to me when I'm dodging the Rangers in the chaparral, feller."

"You thinking of selling, Mister Fairfax?" asked the lawyer. "I guess you won't have time to put it through before——" He paused.

"Before the Rangers get me," grinned the Kid. "I guess I ain't thinking of selling that ranch, feller. I'm giving it away, and you're going to draw up the papers right and legal."

The lawyer stared.

"Jest at present," went on the Kid, "I ain't the Rio Kid. I'm Mister Fairfax, the owner of the Lazy O. I ain't the Rio Kid till I'm proved to be that dog-goned fire-bug in a court of law. Ain't that right?"

"Quite!"

"The Lazy O bunch have stood for me," said the Kid. "I guess I had some trouble with that bunch when I hit the ranch; but they're good boys, and they've stood for me like white men. I'm letting up at the Lazy O, because I won't get that bunch shot up by the Rangers standing for me. I got to hit the trail. And I'm handing over the ranch to the bunch."

"Sho!" said the Pecos Bend lawyer.

"You want to draw up them papers for Mister Fairfax to sign," said the Kid. "I got a list of the names here—every man in the bunch—and they get the ranch on equal shares. Long Bill's appointed foreman. I guess he's a good man, and the bunch will work with him O.K. That ranch is going to belong to the bunch that run it. You get me?"

"You paid forty thousand dollars for that ranch, Mister Fairfax," said the Pecos Bend lawyer.

"Sure! And I reckon them dollars is gone up," said the Kid. "But the bunch is sure a good bunch, and they stood for me, and I'm handing them the ranch. You want to draw up them papers right and legal, Mister Lucas,

SWITCHING OVER

Jack's the Chief Engineer. See his intent expression as he switches over the points. And Dick's the Assistant. His watchful eye sees that the loco. puffs safely on her way. MODEL RAILWAYS—is there anything more fascinating? There's a lot about them in the 1930 HOBBY ANNUAL—the big book for boys and fathers as well. A book you'll treasure for years.

EVERY BOY'S **HOBBY ANNUAL 6/-** net

At all Newsagents and Bookstalls.

If you like stories of School and Adventure you will like the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, 6/-.

while I'm still Mister Fairfax. I reckon they won't be able to give the bunch any trouble after I'm gone. All Packsaddle will stand for them. Now you want to get busy."

The Rio Kid remained a long time in the lawyer's office that morning. Outside the building a constantly-increasing crowd hummed and buzzed, staring at the grey mustang hitched to the post, and repeating the name of the Rio Kid. When the Kid left at last the deed was duly drawn up, signed, and witnessed, and the Lazy O Ranch had been transferred with due legality to the members of the Lazy O bunch in equal shares.

There was a roar as the Kid stepped from the lawyer's office. Men crowded and jostled to see him as he vaulted into the saddle of the grey mustang. The Kid pushed out into the street. On the outskirts of the crowd some were handling guns; and the Kid's clear, cool glance swept over the swarming street.

"Say, you'uns," he drawled, "I ain't come a-shooting this time, but if there's any galoot here honing for trouble, I ain't the guy to say no."

He rode slowly down the street, the buzzing crowd making way for him. No hand was raised, and the Rio Kid rode out of Pecos Bend in peace.

* * * * *

When the Texas Rangers hit the Lazy O Ranch looking for Mister Fairfax, Mister Fairfax was not there. Mister Fairfax had ceased to exist, and the Rio Kid had come to life in his place. And the Rio Kid was far away.

The Lazy O Ranch that had changed hands so often, had changed hands once again, and now it belonged to the Lazy O bunch.

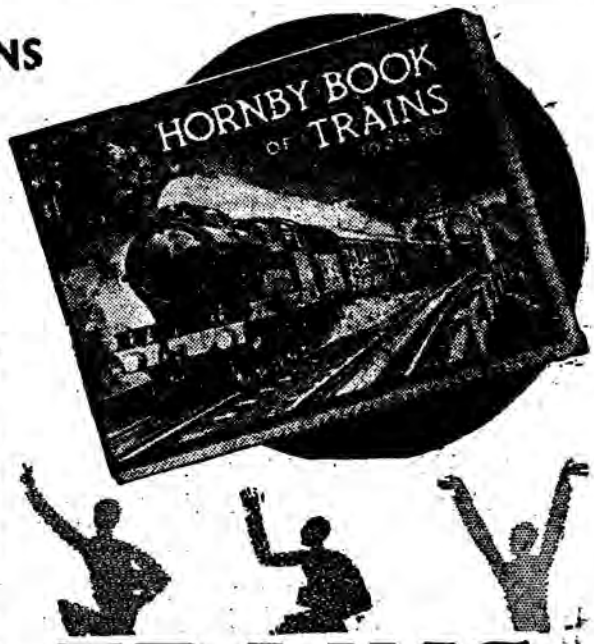
There was deep grousing in the bunkhouse. The bunch would have stood for the Kid to hold the Lazy O against all Texas. And even that magnificent parting gift from the boss did not console the bunch for the loss of Mister Fairfax.

Far away from Packsaddle a rider in goatskin chaps, with a band of silver nuggets round his Stetson, and two long-barrelled, walnut-butted guns in his holsters, rode a trail in the chaparral. The Rio Kid, rancher no longer, once more the outlaw of the Rio Grande.

THE END.

(You'll find the Rio Kid in the thick of perils in next week's roaring Western yarn. Look out for: "THE HOLD-UP!")

BOYS - GET THE NEW
HORNBY BOOK OF TRAINS
BEST EVER ISSUED



The new Hornby Book of Trains is the biggest and best ever issued! It tells a wonderful story of our railways—how a locomotive is driven—how the driver and fireman carry out their duties—how the permanent way is kept in repair—how mail trains work by day and night—and how four British expresses have achieved world-wide fame. It also contains full details and many beautiful illustrations in full colour of the new "better-than-ever" Hornby Trains, together with descriptions and prices of all items included in the Hornby System.

Get a copy to-day from your dealer, price 3d., or send 4½d. in stamps direct to us and we will send you a copy, post free. If you order direct, mention the names and addresses of two or three of your chums and we will send them some interesting Hornby literature. Write clearly and be sure to put the letter "X" after your own name for reference.

Prices of Hornby Trains from 6/- to 95/-.

HORNBY TRAINS
BRITISH AND GUARANTEED
MANUFACTURED BY MECCANO LTD., OLD SWAN, LIVERPOOL.

GROSE'S 8, New Bridge Street, London, E.C.4. LUDGATE CIRCUS
BILLIARDS AT HOME 1/3 per week.

SIZE	DEPOSIT	4 monthly payments	CASH
5 ft. 2 in. × 2 ft. 6 in.	8/-	5/-	19/-
5 ft. 9 in. × 2 ft.	10/-	6/6	26/-
4 ft. 4 in. × 2 ft. 5 in.	14/-	7/6	32/-
4 ft. 9 in. × 2 ft. 6 in.	20/-	10/-	42/-
5 ft. 4 in. × 2 ft. 10 in.	24/-	12/-	52/-

Complete with 2 Cues, 3 Compo. Balls, Marking Board, Spirit Level, Rules and Chalk. COMPLETE LIST FREE.

FREE PASSAGES TO ONTARIO, CANADA, for approved boy farm learners, age 15 to 19. Apply:—ONTARIO GOVERNMENT, 163, STRAND, LONDON.

BE TALLER! Increased my own height to 6ft 3½ins. STAMP brings FREE DETAILS.—ROSS, Height Specialist, Scarborough.

300 STAMPS FOR 6d. (Abroad 1/-), including Airpost, Barbados, Old India, Nigeria, New South Wales, Gold Coast, etc.—W. A. WHITE, Engine Lane, LYE, Stourbridge.

A GREAT ADVENTURE
Boys (ages 14-19) wanted for farm work in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Training, outfit, and assisted passages may be obtained through the Salvation Army. Work guaranteed. Overseas Officers keep in touch with boys after arrival until satisfactorily settled. Write or call The Branch Manager: 3, Upper Thames Street, LONDON, E.C.4; 12, Pembroke Place, LIVERPOOL; 203, Hope Street, GLASGOW; 6, Garfield Chambers, 44, Royal Avenue, BELFAST. DOMESTICATED WOMEN WANTED. Work guaranteed.

100 BRITISH COLONIALS FREE!! Every stamp different. Just send 2d post for approvals—LISBURN & TOWNSEND (U.J.S.), LIVERPOOL.

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.