

WHO WANTS A SIX SHILLING BOOK FOR NOTHING?  
*See the Stupendous offer inside!*

# The POPULAR

EVERY  
TUESDAY.

Week Ending  
September 15th,  
1928.

New Series.  
No. 503.

2<sup>d</sup>



*The Fight for the Cardew Cup!*  
READ THE FINE SCHOOL YARN INSIDE



WESTERN THRILLS!

All the biggest rascals and gunmen in Hard Tack are after Carlos Alvaro, the tenderfoot. But the Rio Kid is looking after this strange little Mexican, and in their turn the Kid's guns are looking after him!

# The Rio Kid!

RALPH REDWAY



A STIRRING LONG COMPLETE YARN OF THE WILD WEST, STARRING AN AMAZING BOY OUTLAW—THE RIO KID!

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Kid Chips In!

"SEARCH me!" murmured the Rio Kid.

Midnight had long passed in the camp of Hard Tack, high up in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

Hard Tack did not really wake till dark, and at midnight it was a lively place. But now the liveliness had died out; the naphtha lamps no longer flared over the saloon, the faro table was closed down, and the doors were shut, the last roysterer had wended his uncertain way home to cabin or shack. Only the stars glimmered down on the straggling street that lay between the high canyon wall and the murmuring creek, on the long, irregular row of wooden shacks and shanties. Hard Tack, at last, was sleeping; but the Rio Kid was wide awake.

The half-dozen sleeping-rooms of the Hard Tack Hotel looked on a stretch of waste ground at the back of the building, plentifully sprinkled with disused cans and tins. Beyond lay rocks and straggling bushes, and then the vast slope of the canyon wall, rising into the dark heavens. The windows were fastened with wooden shutters—glass was an unknown luxury so high up in the sierra. Any pilgrim who so desired could step in and out by his window instead of using the passage that ran through the building. Some of the window shutters stood wide open all night, for the night was hot and the wind from the pine-clad slopes high above refreshing. The Rio Kid's window shutters stood wide, and just within the window-frame the Kid was seated on a packing-case, wrapped in darkness, and watching.

The next window, a few yards away, was shut, and in that room slept the tenderfoot, whom the Kid had taken under his wing. Carlos Alvaro, as the tenderfoot called himself, was sleeping the sleep of deep fatigue; but the Kid, in the adjoining room, had not closed his eyes. The Kid seemed impervious to fatigue. A smile flickered over his face in the darkness as a dim figure emerged from a distant clump of bushes and approached the building with stealthy tread, and stopped outside the tenderfoot's window.

The Kid made no movement, no sound. He watched. His hand had dropped silently to the butt of a gun.

The figure stood motionless, listening,

This week

## "The Tenderfoot's Secret!"

For a full minute it stood, without a movement. Then a hand was lifted in signal, and two other dark forms came stealing from the bushes, joining the first at the tenderfoot's window. There was a murmuring of whispered voices. The Rio Kid sat close, his grip on his gun. Through the deep silence of the night, broken only by the rippling of the mountain creek, the whispering voices came to his intent ears.

"I guess it's a cinch, marshal. This hyer is his room, and I can hear him breathing—fast asleep."

The Kid smiled again. That the tallest of the three figures was Jeff Oakes, the marshal of Hard Tack, he had guessed already. Now he knew. But he still waited quietly. He knew that the tenderfoot had barred his window shutter within, and the ventilating slits were too narrow for a cat to enter. Until the shutter was forced the boy was safe. The Kid was in no hurry to chip in.

The tall man placed his ear to a slit in the closed shutter and listened. No doubt the breathing of the sleeper within was audible to him, for he drew away again and nodded.

"He's asleep, Euchre."

He stepped back and glanced up and down the row of shuttered windows. His face was not visible in the starlight. A neck scarf was tied across it to conceal the features. The Kid noted it with a grin. There was no one abroad at that hour, and Jeff Oakes certainly did not guess that the Texas puncher was on the watch; but he was careful to guard against chance recognition. Hard Tack was a hard camp, and its citizens a hard crew; but the town marshal did not want even the rough crowd at Hard Tack to be put wise to his present proceedings.

"The shutter's fixed inside, marshal!" muttered the third man.

Oakes laughed softly.

"That cuts no ice. It's only a bolt,

and a shove of your shoulder will send it open. But—"

"The boy'll wake."

"Let him! A tap on his cabeza will quiet him. I guess I'm thinking of that fire-bug who came into camp with him—the galoot who shot up Four Kings. He's in the next room, and if he wakes I reckon he will chip in."

"His window's open, boss. I guess it would be easy to fix it for him not to wake."

"I reckon that's what I was thinking, Dave. He rubbed out Four Kings, who was our pard, and I guess it's him for the long trail," muttered the marshal of Hard Tack. "He's a gunman from Texas, and he's sure dangerous. He's here after the Escobedo Mine, I guess, or he wouldn't have come into camp with old Escobedo's son. I guess I'll leave him to you, Dave, and Euchre and me'll fix the tenderfoot."

"I guess I'll fix him, marshal."

The Rio Kid rose silently from the packing-case and stepped back into the cover of the open window shutter, which opened inwards. A few moments more, and Dave was leaning into the room, peering and listening. The silence reassured him, and he stepped over the low, timber window-sill, and set one foot in the room.

Then the Rio Kid moved, and he moved like lightning. The barrel of his revolver was in his hand, and the heavy butt swung through the air and came down with a crash on the back of the intruder's head.

One startled gasp came from Dave as he pitched heavily forward and fell headlong into the Kid's room. He did not move again, and the Kid did not even look at him. He knew that that crashing blow had stunned him.

The tall, black-bearded marshal of Hard Tack had set his shoulder to the shutter of the tenderfoot's window. But he started away again as he heard that heavy fall.

"What the thunder—" he muttered savagely.

"I guess Dave's took a tumble over suthin'," said Euchre.

Crack!

From the Kid's window came the sudden report of a gun. The bullet cut a patch of skin from Euchre's cheek. A startled yell rang out in the silence of the night.

Before the report had died the marshal was springing away, and he vanished round a corner of the building. Euchre, with his hand to his bleeding cheek, stood dazed and staring. The Rio Kid leaned from his window with a grin on his face, his revolver aimed at the staring ruffian.

"You want to beat it," he remarked casually. "I guess if this gun pops again, feller, you won't know what hit you."

"Thunder!" gasped Euchre.

He did not need a second warning. A moment more, and he had raced away round the corner of the building.

The Rio Kid chuckled.

"I guess them galoots have sort of slipped up on it," he murmured, as the hurried footsteps died away in the night.

There was a faint groan from the man at his feet. The Kid sat down on the packing-case again, having taken the gun from Dave's belt and pitched it into a corner. With an amused grin he watched the ruffian struggling back to consciousness. Dave groaned again and opened his eyes, and his hand went to his aching head. Then he sat up suddenly, gasping, and glared round him, and his hand shot to his belt.

"Forget it, feller," drawled the Kid. "I've sure borrowed your gun, and I've got a .45 lookin' at you. Forget it!"

The man peered at him dizzily.

"Shucks! You was awake, I guess," he muttered.

"I sure was," agreed the Kid. "I guess you was looking for a sucker, feller, and you've found a bad man from Texas. You want to keep your eyes peeled next time you horn in while I'm around."

Dave staggered to his feet.

"Beat it," said the Kid cheerily. "I guess I ain't fixing you for the camp cemetery this time. Beat it, pronto, before I change my mind."

The ruffian eyed him as he backed to the window. He stepped out, his eyes still on the boy puncher from Texas.

"I guess I'll fix you for this!" he muttered hoarsely, glaring in at the dim form of the Kid when he was outside.

"I guess—"

A gun glinted as the Kid lifted it.

"Pronto!" he said.

There was a scurry of footsteps along the timber building, and Dave was gone. The Kid chuckled as he put his gun back into the holster. There was no sound of alarm in the timber hotel or in the camp. Shots at all hours of the night were not uncommon in Hard Tack. Not uncommonly, late roysterers, too full of the potent fire-water, blazed away with their guns.

"I guess them jaspers won't horn in again to-night," mused the Kid. "But that tenderfoot sure would have been corralled if I hadn't been riding herd. I guess he sure was plumb loco to mosey into this hyer burg."

The Kid, seating himself on the packing-case, leaned back on the timber wall by the open shutter and closed his eyes. He slept as lightly as a cougar crouched in the branches of a cottonwood. The lightest alarm would have waked the Rio Kid. But there came no alarm, and the Kid did not open his cheery eyes until the dawn was glimmering down on the camp of Hard Tack.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Not Wanted!

ONE-EYE, the landlord, served breakfast in the chuck shack, otherwise the dining-room of the Hard Tack Hotel. The tenderfoot was late, and the Rio Kid waited for him; so they had the

THE POPULAR.—No. 503.

room to themselves when they breakfasted.

"Morning!" said the Kid, when Carlos Alvaro came in. "Had a good night's rest, feller?"

"Si, senor! Es tarde," added the boy, as he sat down.

"Yep; it's late," said the Kid. "But I guess you wanted some rest, feller. You didn't wake?"

"Not once. I was very tired."

The Kid grinned. He had no intention of alarming the tenderfoot by telling him of his narrow escape during the night.

They breakfasted, the young Mexican very silent and thoughtful. The Kid was thinking, too.

He had not thought of remaining long at Hard Tack. He had taken in the place, on his way south, simply because he had been told that Hard Tack was the roughest and wildest and most lawless mining camp in the mountains of Colorado, and the Kid had been rather curious to see it. A few days more or less made no difference to the Rio Kid. Indeed, he doubted the wisdom of his decision to return to his own country of Texas; and perhaps, for that reason, any delay en route was more or less welcome to him. And it went against the grain with the Kid to ride on, and leave this benighted tenderfoot alone in such a wild hole as Hard Tack. But he smiled at the idea of hanging on indefinitely to "ride herd" over a galoot he knew nothing of, and whose business in the camp he did not know, though he might guess.

The boy rose from the table at last, and made the Kid a graceful bow.

"Adios, senor!" he said.

"Hold on," said the Kid good-humouredly. "You going?"

"Si, senor."

"Might a galoot ask where?" grinned the Kid.

The boy stood by the table, hesitating and colouring.

"I have business, senor," he said at last.

"In the camp?"

The boy did not answer.

"Outside the camp?" persisted the Kid.

"Si, senor."

"And you figure that you'll get on with it, boy?"

"Si."

"Sit down again, and let's talk," suggested the Kid.

"But, senor—"

"Oh, shucks!" said the Kid. "You've given your name here as Carlos Alvaro. A dozen galoots have recognised you by your likeness to old Escobedo, and reckon that you're his son, come back to look for the old man's gold-mine."

"But I have said that I am not, senor."

"I guess that cuts no ice, with the pilgrims who have been hunting for ten years to find the lost mine of Escobedo," answered the Kid. "They figure that you're old Escobedo's son; and if they knew about that paper you've got hidden in the lining of your hat, I reckon they'd jump to it that you've got a map of the Escobedo Mine."

The boy crimsoned.

"Oh, senor!"

"I guess it's nothing to me," grinned the Kid. "I ain't after the Escobedo Mine, feller. I'm only telling you. A good many galoots in this camp have a hunch that you can tell them where the mine is, and they reckon they're going to make you do it. Among them, that galoot with the black beard—the marshal of the town. Now I ain't hornin' into your business, feller; but I ain't letting you run loose on this range. I'm riding herd over you. Savvy?"

"But—"

"You don't even pack a gun," said the Kid commiseratingly; "and I guess you couldn't handle one if you did. I tell you that you're in danger every minute you stay in this camp; and the minute you set foot outside it you'll be roped in by some fire-bug, who will ask you to guide him to the old greaser's mine with a pistol to your head. Got that?"

The boy did not answer.

His face had paled, and the Kid could see that his hands were trembling. But his expression was one of passionate resolve.

"I reckon I'm going to see you through," explained the Kid. "If you're going out for a leetle pasear, I figure on coming along. What say?"

The boy shook his head.

"Oh, shucks!" said the Kid. "I guess you're right not to trust a stranger at sight, feller; but you ain't got any choice in this matter. You're a gone coon if I don't ride herd over you."

Alvaro smiled faintly.

"I do not distrust you, senor," he said. "It is not that. You saved me from the road-agent on the trail."

"But—"

"Well, give it a name."

"But it is a secret, senor. I can tell no one. I have sworn secrecy, and I can tell no one—not even a generous friend like you, senor."

"You don't want my company for that leetle pasear this morning?"

grinned the Kid.

"No, senor."

"Suppose I tell you that three gold-darned fire-bugs—one of them the marshal of this camp—tried to get in at your window last night, and I stopped them," said the Kid.

"Oh!"

"You'd sure have heard a gun talking if you hadn't been so sound asleep," chuckled the Kid.

"Gracias, senor! I thank you; but I—I must go alone where I have to go. If there is danger, I cannot help it. I must go, and alone."

"But I tell you—"

"Adios, senor."

And with that the boy left the chuck shack, leaving the Rio Kid sitting alone at the table. For several long minutes the Kid sat in thought.

He lounged out at last, and walked round the corral.

There the black-muzzled grey mustang gave a whinny at the sight of his master, and the Kid stroked his glossy muzzle.

"We ain't wanted, old hoss," smiled the Kid. "It's you and me for the trail, and dog-goned tenderfeet can look after themselves, critter. We're going to hit the trail and leave 'em to it."

The Kid went into the timber hotel for his saddle.

But he went slowly.

The tenderfoot had told him plainly enough that he did not want him to ride herd—that he wanted to go his way alone. That surely was enough for the Rio Kid, who did not yearn to ride herd over a benighted tenderfoot, and especially a greaser. The morning was fresh and fair, and called the Kid to the trail, and the thought of the wide, green grasslands of his own country called to him.

But when he came out of the hotel again the Kid was not carrying his saddle. Somehow, he could not make up his mind to it.

He loafed out into the sunny street. Hard Tack was at work. Pick and shovel rang from the alluvial claims along the creek. The Kid caught sight of Long Bill coming into the camp, and hailed him.

"Hallo! Seen that pesky young greaser around?"

Long Bill grinned.

"I reckon I seed him beating it for the canyon. Say, feller, you came into camp with him yesterday. You savvy whether he's young Escobedo or not?"

"I guess I never saw him before yesterday," answered the Kid. "I picked him up on the trail, where his cayuse dropped him."

"He's sure young Escobedo, and he's after the old man's mine," said Long Bill. "I reckon he won't get away with it. I seed Euchre and Denver Dave quit camp soon arter him, and I reckon they'll be talking turkey to him."

"Oh, sho!" said the Kid.

He stood with a thoughtful frown on his face.

Euchre and Denver Dave, he had no doubt, were the two men who had been with the marshal the previous night.

The tenderfoot had gone out of camp—whether to locate the Escobedo mine or not. He had, as the Kid had warned him, walked directly into deadly danger. It was no business of the Kid's. He had offered to see the boy through, and had been refused.

"The greaser was hoofing it?" he called out, as Long Bill went into the timber hotel.

"Yep!" answered the miner over his shoulder.

The Kid pursed his lips.

"Escobedo or not, he's gone to locate that pesky mine," he muttered, "and them fire-bugs will sure rope him in, like a sheep. And you sure can't mind your own business, Kid Carfax, can you, you gink?"

Apparently the Kid could not, for after a few moments of thought, he went out of the street into the open canyon, and followed the way the young Mexican had gone.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Roped In!

"PUT 'em up!"

"Madre de Dios!" exclaimed the Mexican.

The boy was not a half-mile from Hard Tack, but the rugged, winding canyon hid the camp from sight. He was on the open trail, over which passed all the traffic to and from the camp. Well as he knew that danger dogged his steps in the Colorado sierra, he had not looked for open attack there, but it had come.

A sound of running feet made him turn his head, and as he turned, Euchre and Denver Dave came up, each with a six-gun in his hand. Two revolvers covered the unarmed Mexican.

"Put 'em up!" repeated Euchre, with a grin. "I reckon we've got you dead to rights this time, young Escobedo!"

"We sure have," grinned Denver Dave.

Alvaro slowly raised his hands above his head, a look of hunted despair on his olive face. Under the shade of his wide sombrero he was pale as chalk.

The two ruffians closed in on him, with grinning faces. As they saw that he was not armed they thrust their revolvers away. Six-guns were not needed in dealing with the tenderfoot.

"I guess you can put your paws down, greaser," said Euchre. "Search me! You've come up here into the sierra to locate the Escobedo Mine, and you don't pack a gun! I guess you are a locoed gink."

"Senor, I—"

"Can it!" interrupted Denver Dave. "Git him along, Euchre. We don't want any galoots horning into this game. The boss was sure mad the way we slipped up on it last night; but that ornery fire-bug from Texas ain't here to chip in now. Git a move on!"

"This-a-way, greaser," said Euchre.

"Where are you taking me?" exclaimed Alvaro in alarm.

"Jest a leetle piece into the hills," grinned Dave. "You'll sure see the boss afore you're much older, and you'll fix us up for locating the Escobedo Mine. Say, you was plumb loco, walking out of camp that-a-way, and leaving your pardner behind!"

"I have no 'partner,'" said the Mexican. "The caballero you speak of is a stranger to me."

**THE MIDNIGHT INTRUDER!** As the man stepped over the low window sill the Rio Kid acted. The barrel of his revolver swung through the air and came down with a crash on the back of the intruder's head. (See Chapter 1.)



"I guess that's a plumb lie," said Euchre. "But quit chewing the rag. You've got to hustle."

"Senor, I—"

"Quit it, I tell you!"

The young Mexican was marched out of the open, wide canyon, into a rocky gulch that split the canyon wall to the west.

His eyes wandered round him wildly as he went, like those of an animal seeking a way of escape.

But there was no escape for him.

Either of the two powerful ruffians could have crushed him in a grip he could not have resisted. And they were armed, and he was weaponless.

"Oh, I was mad to come here!" he exclaimed bitterly.

There was a chuckle from his captors.

"I guess you've hit it plumb centre, greaser," said Euchre. "You're sure the softest tenderfoot that ever struck these parts. That pardner of yours is some fire-bug; but you—you're jest putty, I calculate. Hoof it!"

They tramped through the narrow gulch, farther and farther from the Hard Tack Canyon. Great rocks and cliffs, crowned by pine-trees, and rugged, loose boulders, surrounded them.



some distance from the canyon trail Denver Dave halted.

"I reckon you can git that greenhorn greaser to the cave, Euchre, and I'll mosey back to camp and put the boss wise. I reckon he wants to see young Escobedo pronto."

"Sure!"

Denver Dave tramped back the way they had come.

Alvaro glanced after him, and then at Euchre. Some thought of making a desperate attempt to escape seemed to be in his mind now that only one of his captors remained with him.

Euchre read the thought in his face and laughed hoarsely.

"Forget it," he jeered. "Git on—hoof it!" His hard, heavy hand gave the Mexican a shove that nearly knocked him over.

Carlos Alvaro tramped on again wearily.

Higher and higher they tramped into the hills. The distance was not great, but the way was winding and rocky and rugged. The little Mexican panted as he went, the burly ruffian swinging along at his side without a sign of effort.

Euchre stopped at last, where a high, deep cave opened in the rugged side of the gulch.

"Get in!"

The boy tramped into the cave, and the ruffian followed him in. Euchre pointed to a heap of blankets on the floor.

"I reckon you can take a rest, if you want," he said. "You got to wait here till the boss comes."

"The boss?" repeated the boy. "Who—"

"You'll know when he comes," grinned Euchre. "I reckon we had this fixed up for you last night, feller, only we slipped up on it getting at you in camp. That pardner of yours chipped in, darn his pesky hide. But I reckon he won't chip in hyer, any."

The boy sighed deeply. He had refused the help of the Rio Kid for the sake of his secret. But what was his secret worth to him now? He had come to Hard Tack like a lamb among wolves, and already he had fallen into the snare. And even the Rio Kid could not help him now.

He threw himself wearily on the pile of blankets.

Euchre sat in the mouth of the cave, leaning against the rock, and filled his pipe and lighted it. He gave no further attention to the Mexican. The boy could not attempt to leave the cave without passing him, and that was impossible.

The hours of the sunny morning passed, and as the sun approached the zenith, streaming down in a blaze into the narrow, rocky gulch, Euchre knocked out his pipe, rose to his feet, and stood staring down the gulch towards the canyon. He returned to his seat at last, and smoked again, with a knitted brow.

The Mexican, watching him, could guess his thoughts. Denver Dave had gone back to camp to inform the boss that the tenderfoot was a prisoner, and Euchre evidently expected his boss to lose no time in reaching the cave. Ample time had elapsed, but there had been no sound of a footstep in the lonely, rocky waste.

"Durn my boots!" ejaculated Euchre at last. "Goldarn! him! Why in thunder ain't the marshal hyer?"

Alvaro had guessed, from what the

Rio Kid had told him, that the marshal of Hard Tack was the boss of whom his captors had spoken. Euchre rose again at last, and sorted out bully beef and a can of water and hard biscuit from a cleft in the cave, and sat down to eat. He signed to the prisoner to join him.

"I reckon it's darned queer, the boss not hornin' in afore this," growled Euchre. "He knows you're here for sure. Durn my boots! I ain't stopping here a hull day to watch a dog-goned greaser."

He sat at the mouth of the cave again, smoking and grumbling, watching and listening for footsteps in the gulch. But no sound broke the silence of the lonely hills.

Hours since, Denver Dave should have reached the marshal's cabin at Hard Tack, with the news that the son of Escobedo was a prisoner at the cave. Yet the marshal had not come. The face of the ruffian grew more and more puzzled and sullen, as the hours lengthened, and still the marshal of Hard Tack did not come.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Shot for Shot!

"O H, shucks!" grunted the Rio Kid.

The sun was hot in the canyon, and the Kid was annoyed. He stopped in the shade of a towering boulder, and fanned his face with his



NEXT WEEK:

## "THE SURPRISE OF HIS LIFE!"

Stetson. He had left Hard Tack to look for the tenderfoot; but he had known that he was not likely to find him, and now he knew it was certain.

The wilderness of rock gave no sign. Even to the Kid's keen eyes, there was nothing to tell where the Mexican had gone.

He might be in the vast canyon, hidden from sight by the great rocks or clumps of pines or the irregularities of the ground; or he might have turned into one of a hundred gulches or arroyos or draws. He might be ten feet away or he might be ten miles. Likely enough he had left the canyon, if, as the Kid suspected, he was there to attempt to locate the lost mine of Escobedo. Likelier still, Euchre and Denver Dave had roped him in. The Kid could have picked up any trail that would have been visible to the eyes of an Apache or a Comanche; but the rugged rock told him nothing.

"O H, shucks!" he repeated, in disgust.

He was wasting his time, and he knew it. He had no use for tenderfeet, and he had never liked greasers. The galoot had as good as told him to mind his own business, and not to horn in. Why couldn't he leave it at that, the Kid asked himself impatiently. It was only the thought of the boy's utter helplessness in his wild surroundings, that kept the Kid from returning to the camp, saddling up his mustang, and riding. Somehow, he couldn't leave the boy to his fate.

A Stetson hat bobbing among the rocks caught the Kid's eye, and he watched it idly. Someone was coming down the canyon side, from one of the gulches that spilt the great wall of cliff. The man was winding his way among the rocks down to the trail that ran along the canyon bottom; and he emerged into the trail at last, and into full view of the Rio Kid. The Kid's eyes, fixing on him, discerned something familiar about the roughly-clad, stubbly-faced pilgrim. He had seen him once, and it was in the dark, but he was sure—almost sure—that this was one of the men who had backed up the marshal the night before—the man who had entered his window, and whom he had clubbed with his revolver.

The Kid's eyes glinted. If this was Dave, one of the marshal's men, whom Long Bill had seen leaving the camp after the tenderfoot, it was more than likely that he knew where the boy was. For the Kid knew that the chances were a hundred to one that the boy had already fallen into the hands of his enemies.

The man came tramping along the trail towards the camp, not for the moment perceiving the puncher leaning against the rock, shaded from the sun. But as he drew nearer, he sighted the Kid; and the look on his face was one of instant and hostile recognition. It was the look that the Kid expected to see there, and he was ready for what followed. Denver Dave's hand flew to his belt; but before he could draw a gun, the Kid's hand came up with a revolver in it, and he smiled over the levelled barrel.

"Drop it, feller."

Slowly, with savage rage in his face, the ruffian relinquished the gun. The Kid had been too quick for him.

"Step this way, feller," called out the Kid cheerily. "I guess I want to chew the rag with you for a piece."

Denver Dave came a few strides towards him, and the Kid motioned him to halt at a dozen paces. He lowered his gun; but it was ready to rise again, and the marshal's man did not dare to touch a weapon. But his eyes glinted fiercely as he waited and watched for a chance.

"I reckon I'm wise to you, feller," smiled the Kid. "You're the dog-goned galoot that horned in at my window last night."

"Ain't never seed you afore," answered Dave. "I guess I don't know you from Adam, puncher."

"You didn't horn in last night into my room at the camp yonder, and corral a clip on the cabeza from my gun?" asked the Kid.

"None."

"You're sure a prize liar," said the Kid. "What were you pulling a gun on me for at sight, then?"

"I reckon I took you for a road-agent, standing there watching the trail," answered Denver Dave. "I reckoned I'd

(Continued on page 28.)

# The POPULAR BIRTHDAY GIFT CLUB

Would you like a Six-Shilling Annual for nothing? Of course you would! Then take a look at the Wonderful Gift Scheme below!

## HOW TO JOIN THE CLUB.

**I**N order to become a member of our **FREE BIRTHDAY GIFT CLUB** you must, first of all, fill in **ALL** the particulars required on the special Registration Coupon printed below. When you have done this, post the coupon to:

The Editor,  
The **POPULAR** Birthday Gift Club,  
5, Carmelite Street,  
London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

Providing your registration coupon is filled up correctly,

Take every care that the **DATE OF BIRTH** which you give on your registration coupon is absolutely correct in every particular, for this date, once it is accepted for registration can, in no circumstances, be altered afterwards.

Please remember that the only method of joining our Birthday Club is by filling up one of the printed registration coupons published in this paper. No other form of registration can be recognised.

It should be understood that this scheme will continue until the present stock of annuals is exhausted. Therefore, register at once.

The Editor's decision upon all points arising out of this

Cut Here .....

### REGISTRATION COUPON.

(Please write very plainly.)

### BIRTHDAY GIFTS.

Name.....Date of Birth : Day.....Month.....Year.....

Full Address.....

I declare that I am a reader of "THE POPULAR" and..... and purchase **BOTH THESE PAPERS** regularly from my newsagent. I have carefully read the rules of your Birthday Club Scheme, and I agree to abide by them in every particular. Will you please enrol me as a member of your Free Birthday Gift Club.

Newsagent's Name.....

Address.....

**THIS COUPON IS ONLY AVAILABLE UNTIL SEPT. 22nd, 1928.**

**POPULAR.**

**SEPT. 15th, 1928.**

..... Cut Here

you will then be enrolled as a member of our Birthday Club, and may consider yourself as such unless you are notified by us to the contrary.

Then watch carefully the lists of birthday dates, which are published in this paper week by week. Should the date of **YOUR BIRTH** be the same as one of the published dates, you will be able to claim either a "Holiday" or "Hobby" Annual, whichever you desire.

Once readers are enrolled as members of our Birthday Gift Club they have no need to re-register, as their original registration holds good, providing they continue to purchase regularly the **POPULAR**, and also one other of the following papers—the "Magnet," "Gem," "Nelson Lee," or "Boys' Realm," as stated on their registration coupon.

scheme must be accepted as final and legally binding. This is an express condition of registration.

Only **ONE** registration coupon need be filled in, and sent to the address given above. This should be received on or before the date stated on the registration coupon.

#### READERS OVERSEAS.

All Overseas readers are eligible to participate in our Free Birthday Gift Club, as special time extensions are allowed in the cases of readers living elsewhere than in the British Isles.

**THIS WEEK'S LIST OF BIRTHDAY DATES AND SPECIAL CLAIMS FORM, APPEAR ON PAGE 22 OF THIS ISSUE!**

**DON'T DELAY—JOIN TO-DAY!**



**"THE RIO KID!"**

(Continued from page 12.)

be first if there was going to be gunning. I've been held up on this trail afore."

The Kid scrambled him. "He was almost sure that this man was the man he had clubbed the night before, and if he was the man, he could tell where his tenderfoot was, the Kid figured.

"You ain't the man I clubbed, then?" asked the Kid.

"I sure ain't."

"You seen a Mexican on the trail this morning?" Dave shook his head.

"I ain't seen any Mexican," he answered. "There ain't many greasers in this country, puncher."

"You didn't trail the greaser out of camp, you and your pard Euchre?" asked the Kid.

"Ain't got any pard, and never heard of a galoot named Euchre," said Dave. "I figure you're taking me for another galoot, stranger."

"I reckon I want to know!" drawled the Kid. "You allow you ain't the man I clubbed with this same gun last night at the hotel in Hard Tack?"

"I sure I ain't."

"Take off that Stetson," said the Kid. "And let me see your cabela! If there ain't a lump on it the size of a big nugget, I'll allow I've made a mistake, feller."

Denver Dave breathed hard, and did not remove his hat. The great bruise on his head, made by the butt of the Kid's gun, was throbbing still, and it was more than large enough to be seen if he took off his Stetson.

"You hear my toot?" asked the Kid pleasantly, and he made a motion with his gun hand. "I let you off last night, feller; but if you don't toe the line now, your goose is cooked, and I'm telling you so. Chuck that Stetson into the trail, or I'll sure shoot it off your head."

The man eyed him desperately, and did not stir, and the Kid's gun suddenly cracked. The bullet bored a hole through the crown of the hat, grazing the head of the ruffian. Denver Dave gave a startled yell, and sprang back. The smoking revolver looked him in the face.

"You want your ticket for soup?" asked the Kid menacingly. "Drop that Stetson, if you don't want me to drop you, pronto."

With a curse, the ruffian buried the hat to the ground. The Kid stepped forward a pace or two, and smiled as he sighted the great bruise that had been made by his revolver-butt.

"You're sure the goods," he said, with a nod. "Now, then, galoot, I want that greaser? Savvy? You're going to take a leetle pascer with me, and show me jest where you've left him, corralled."

"You're after the Escobado mine, puncher?" muttered Denver Dave.

"Not any," smiled the Kid. "I'm after the greaser, jest because I'm an ornery cuss that can't mind his own business, and I'm riding herd over him. I want you to put me wise where he is."

Denver Dave eyed him, his teeth gritting. The Kid had lowered his gun again, but the ruffian knew how quick he was to handle it. The Kid stepped closer to him.

"I guess I'll borrow your gun, feller," he said. "And then I reckon you'll hit the trail for the spot where that greaser is corralled."

He stretched out his left hand to disarm the ruffian. With a sudden movement, so sudden that even the wary Kid was almost taken off his guard, Denver Dave snatched the gun from his belt even as the Kid's fingers almost touched it.

Bang!

The shot was swift and sudden, so swift that the aim was too hasty, and it missed the Kid by inches. The Kid's answering shot was blended into the same report. Denver Dave essayed to pull the trigger a second time, but he was swaying as he pulled, and when the shot flew, it flew wild, as the marshal's man crumpled down to the earth.

The Rio Kid drew a deep, deep breath. Denver Dave had almost beaten him at it—but not quite; but the Kid had had one of the narrowest escapes of his life.

"I guess it was you or me, feller, and it was you for the long trail," drawled the Kid. "I reckon I'm going to find that tenderfoot if all the bulldozers in Hard Tack stand in the way. I sure am!"

And the Rio Kid left the trail, and plunged into the rocky wilderness from which Denver Dave had emerged, seeking sign, and finding none; but keeping on with indomitable resolution while the long hours wore away.

THE END

(Will the Rio Kid find his new friend, the little Tenderfoot? See the next roaring Western tale included in next Tuesday's programme.)

**"A Chalet in the Woods!"**

(Continued from page 22.)

Jimmy grinned cheerily. "I've heard that you've got a baronet in this study," he said. "Can't a fellow have a look at him?"

"Cheerly young ass!" said Talboys. Hanson laughed. He was a good-natured fellow, though he had rather a lofty way of dealing with the Lower School.

"Well, here he is," he said, with a nod towards the fellow with the aquiline nose.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep, deep breath. He was so startled that he could scarcely help showing it. Master Philip's eyes were fixed on him rather grimly.

"Who may you happen to be?" he asked.

"I happen to be Silver, of the Fourth Form," said Jimmy, recovering himself. "All serene—we don't have giddy baronets dropping in every day of the term, you know. Are you Sir Harry Rutland?"

"Hasn't Hanson just told you so?" grunted the Fifth-Former.

"Shut the door after you, Silver," said Hanson.

Jimmy Silver left the study. His brain was almost in a whirl.

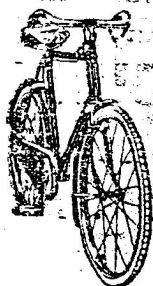
What did it mean? But for that odd adventure at Rutland Park in the vacation, Jimmy Silver would not, of course, have taken any interest in Rutland of the Fifth; he would have had no suspicion regarding him. Now he had something more than suspicion.

Outside the Fistical Four, nobody at Rookwood, apparently, knew anything about Master Philip Packington. He was accepted there, as Sir Harry Rutland, of Rutland Park—a rich heir and a baronet. And he was nothing of the sort! Jimmy Silver knew that. What was Philip Packington doing at Rookwood in a false name—in the name of a fellow who was expected at the school, but evidently had not come to Rookwood?

What did it mean?

THE END

(You will find next Tuesday's long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, full of thrills. Don't miss "THE FIFTH FORM-BARONET!")



Save £4

A great chance to save £4 and have a famous SELBY All-British Cycle. Sturmey-Archer 3-Speed Gear, Dunlop Cord Tyres, Lycett Saddle, Hans Renold Chain, etc. Packed free. Carriage paid. Direct from factory. Free Trial. Immediate delivery on payment of Small Deposit. Easy Terms. 3d. a day. Money refunded if dissatisfied.

WRITE FOR FREE ART LIST. SELBY Mfg. Co., Ltd. (Dept. 435), 21a, FINSBURY STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

300 STAMPS FOR 6d. (Abroad 1/-), including Airport, Barcelona, Old India, Nigeria, New South Wales, Gold Coast, etc.—W. A. WHITE, Engine Lang, E.V.E. Scarborough.

HEIGHT INCREASED 5/- Complete Course 3.5 inches In ONE MONTH. Without appliances—design or dieting. THE FAMOUS CLIVE SYSTEM NEVER FAILS. Complete Course 5/-, P.O. 40st 1/6, or further details stamp. P. A. CLIVE, Harrold House, COLWYN-BAY, North Wales.



25 UNUSED COLONIALS and FREE!! 100 DIFFERENT STAMPS FREE!! An extraordinary offer. Send 2d. postage requesting approval. LISBURN & TOWNSEND, London Road, Liverpool.

BLUSHING.—FREE to all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment, and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Enclose stamp to pay postage to—Mr. A. TEMPLE (Specialist), Palace House, 128, Shaftesbury Avenue (2nd Floor), London, W.1. (Established over 20 years.)

ACTIVE AGENTS WANTED to sell Private Christmas Cards. Experience not essential. Highest Commission. Valuable Prizes. Free Sample Book. Applr: DENTON & CO., Dept. D.13, ACCINGTON.

MAGIC TRICKS, etc.—Parcels 2/6, 5/6. Ventriloquist's Price 6d. each, 4/11/-.—T. W. Harrison, 239, Pentonville Rd., London, N.1.

WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER