

**THRILLS GALORE** *in every Tale in this issue*

# The POPULAR

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EVERY  
TUESDAY



**FIVE SCHOOLBOYS** in Fearful Peril!  
*See the Gripping Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. in Africa  
Inside!*



A GRIPPING TALE OF THE RIO KID'S BRUSH WITH TEXAS RANGERS!

# CORNERING THE KID!

RALPH  
REDWAY



The Rio Kid, hunted by Texas Rangers in the "Evil Country," the last retreat of law-breakers, and with the guns of cow-punchers and sheriffs turned against him should he attempt to make a break for the plainlands, is at last cornered. Is it the end for the boy outlaw of Frio?

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Circled by Foes!

**H**OPELESS, from the viewpoint of men who were hunting him, was the situation of the Rio Kid. Closer and closer the net had been drawn, and even to those who knew by bitter experience the Kid's elusive ways, it seemed that the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande was to be cinched at last.

To the Kid himself, in these long, hot days and black nights amid the rocks and pines of the Mal Pais, it seemed sometimes that his enemies were right—that they had him at last, and that his long, wild trail was drawing to its end.

In the Mal Pais—the "Evil Country"—there were perhaps twenty or thirty square miles of rugged rock, boulder piled on boulder, precipitous hillsides rived with canyons and arroyos and split by deep barrancas; belts of scrubby pine, patches of deep, tangled chaparral, stretches of waterless sand and stone, and here and there torrents that leaped foaming from rock to rock. It was an ideal country for any hombre who sought to hide himself—and it had hidden many a fugitive horse-thief and gunman and outcast Apache and Yaqui.

The Rio Kid had counted on safety when he plunged into that arid waste, where no man entered unless driven. But the hunt was up, and it was hot at his heels. For days and weeks the Kid had ridden perilous paths in the Bad Country, but the pursuit never slackened; rather, it grew hotter and hotter, closer and closer. All through the cow-towns along the Rio Grande and the Pecos the news had spread that the Kid was cornered in the Mal Pais, and from all sides came eager riders to join in the hunt, now that there was a chance at last of getting the elusive Kid in a cinch. Round the Mal Pais,

on all sides, horsemen rode or camped and watched. Through and through the bad lands, Captain Hall and his detachment of Texas Rangers rode, combing the Mal Pais with a fine comb in search of the Kid.

A score of times, at least, he had almost fallen into their hands; but always his phenomenal luck had befriended him. A dozen times the Kid had been sighted by watchers on some edge of the Mal Pais, looking for a chance to make a break for the open plains; and every time he had found foes in his path and had hunted cover again among the rocks.

The Mal Pais, generally tenanted by lurking fugitives from justice and Indians escaped from the reservations, was deserted now, save by the Rio Kid and his hunters. Lurking malefactors had fled from the hunt that was going on, giving rangers and sheriff's men a wide berth. The outcast Apaches who had their den in the heart of the arid tract had gone. For these, for gunmen and "bad" men generally, the hunters had no heed—their net was spread for the Rio Kid.

Long had the boy outlaw defied them, snapped his fingers at sheriffs and Rangers alike, and ridden his wild trail as if he bore a charmed life. Now he was almost at the end of his rope; and this time it was to be the finish. In every cow-town and cattle camp for a hundred miles there was only one topic—the Rio Kid and his last desperate fight against overwhelming odds—his last struggle against the net that was closing round him slowly but surely.

Hopeless it looked for the Kid, hunted from canyon to canyon, from arroyo to arroyo, from thicket to thicket. Friendless and alone in the Mal Pais, his horse and his guns all that he had to rely upon, the circle of determined hunters closing in on him, daily closer,

it looked even to the Kid as if the game was up.

But hope was a part of the Kid's nature—the last thing he was likely to part with. His swift mustang, his un-failing gun, his own skill on the trail, stood him in good stead. Where the Kid moved no sign was left for the keenest eye. Many times he had lain in cover, with eager foes passing within a few yards of him, unknowing; many times a desperate ride up some seemingly inaccessible cliff, a wild leap over some wide and yawning barranca, had saved him when all seemed lost. Days, many days, had passed, and the Kid was still free; though with every passing day the limits of his freedom were more and more circumscribed.

Making a break out of the Mal Pais he had found to be impossible. Lurking fugitives in the bad lands had fled—some had been allowed to escape un-regarded, others had been roped in; but for the Kid there was no chance of making a get-away. He was wise to that now, and he had made up his mind to it. There was a chance of wearing out his hunters—many of them, at least; ranchers and cow-punchers, who had joined in largely for the excitement of the hunt, sheriffs who had business elsewhere. No chance of tiring out Mule-Kick Hall and his Rangers—the Kid knew that. There was only one thing that could have stopped Mule-Kick Hall and that was a bullet through the heart.

But in these days the Kid's eyes often sought the sky—cloudless, burning blue that stretched pitiless with heat over the Mal Pais. Long had that blazing heat lasted; and the Kid did not need to learn anything about weather signs.

Likely enough, he knew, it would be followed by a cloud-burst, and if that came it came with salvation for the Kid. When the Mal Pais became an inferno of falling rocks and raging

torrents, when every arroyo and canyon, now baking dry in torrid heat, foamed with rushing water, it would be a different proposition for the hunters. The Kid had seen the Mal Pais under a cloudburst, and knew what it was like. And that hope was always at the back of his mind, as burning day followed day.

But if hope had not left the Kid now as he lay behind a rock looking along the barrel of his rifle, grounds of hope certainly seemed to be gone. They had hunted the elusive Kid to his last refuge, high up in the heart of the Mal Pais. There, on a high plateau, the chapparal grew thick and tangled, haunted by cougar and creeping snake. On three sides the high mesa was inaccessible, save to the hardest climber. On the fourth side rugged slopes led up to it, but across the way lay a deep wide barranca, which had to be crossed before the last refuge of the Kid could be reached. Wide and deep yawned that black gulf, with a murmur of flowing water at the bottom of it thirty yards down. Only in one spot the two sides approached close, and the barranca became a mere rift, six or seven feet across. There it was easy to pass—if the Rio Kid was not in the way.

Behind a rock a dozen yards from the edge of the barranca his keen eyes on that narrow rift, lay the Kid—waiting. He knew that the Rangers were coming. Every now and then a Stetson hat glimpsed into sight—every few moments the ring of a stirrup or a bridle reached his ears. They knew where he was; they knew that he was at the end of his trail. To flee further he would have had to scramble down one of the steep sides of the mesa—into the hands of enemies who waited and watched below. There was no further flight for the Rio Kid. The high mesa, tangled with chapparal, was surrounded, and on the only accessible side the enemy were advancing. All that remained to the boy outlaw was to sell his life dearly—unless a miracle came to his aid.

But his face was cool, even smiling, as he looked along the rifle-barrel, watching through a chink in the rocks. They were coming, but they would not get him easily. Back in the chapparal the Kid's mustang was in cover, safe from stray bullets. It was characteristic of the Kid that he looked to his horse's safety before his own. Before long bullets would be flying thick over the mesa. The Kid's rifle was ready to join in the chorus.

Many times during that long and deadly hunt the crack of the Kid's guns had been heard; and every time it was heard it meant that one fewer foe trailed the boy outlaw. Many a wounded man had gone back to the camps thanking his lucky stars that the boy outlaw had not burned powder to kill. The Kid could plant his lead exactly where he liked. And for some whim, difficult for his hunters to understand, he chose to plant it where it would disable and not kill. It was not with any thought of propitiating his foes; for the Kid knew that he had no mercy to expect. It was one of the Kid's ways, and that was all.

A Stetson hat bobbed into the Kid's view across the barranca. A Ranger pushed out from behind a rocky ridge. The Kid grinned as he pulled trigger.

The Stetson spun from the Ranger's head, taking a lock of hair and a strip of skin with it.

With a yell the Ranger hunted cover again.

The Kid laughed.

A burst of firing followed. Bullets

whistled over the high mesa and tore leaf and branch in the chapparal behind the Kid.

He lay in cover and waited.

Among the rugged ridges and stacked, jagged boulders on the slope up to the mesa, the Rangers had plenty of cover, and they were freezing to it, since the Kid's shot had warned them that he was there and watching.

The Kid could not see them; but his thoughts followed their movements, as easily as his eye could have done.

They had left their horses below now—riding at the Kid's rifle was too foolhardy, even for Texas Rangers. On foot they came up the slope, stealing from rock to rock, from hollow to hollow, from straggling bush to bush. The Kid reckoned that there were twenty-five to thirty Rangers in the bunch, and a dozen of them were keeping up the fire from behind, while the rest advanced under cover to closer quarters. The Kid waited coolly. When they had to pass the barranca, they had to show themselves for the leap across; and the Kid figured that they would not make the grade.

Within a dozen feet of the barranca, on the lower side, was a mass of rugged boulders, the last cover for the Rangers. The Kid watched it. By sound, if not by sight, he was aware that his foes had reached it, and lay there in cover, gathering force for the final rush.

The firing from farther back died away at a signal, and a voice hailed the Rio Kid from behind the boulders:

"Say, you fire-bug!"

It was the voice of Mule-Kick Hall.

"Say, you coyote!" retorted the Kid. "If you want to talk, come out into the open, Jim Hall, and don't chew the rag, hiding like a dog-goned prairie-wolf! Say, you scared to show yourself?"

An angry curse was the answer.

"I guess swearing won't buy you anything, Jim Hall!" chuckled the Kid. "Do you figure that I'd draw a bead on you while you was talking turkey?"

"I guess I wouldn't put it past you!" growled Hall.

"Forget it, feller!" said the Kid. "If you want a pow-wow instead of gun-play, I ain't got any kick coming! Tell your guys to keep their triggers down; and I'll sure hop out of cover, pronto!"

"You can take my word for that, and you know it!" growled Hall.

"Sure!" said the Kid.

And, with careless coolness, he rose from cover, and stood in full view, his rifle resting lightly in the hollow of his arm. On the other side of the barranca Jim Hall stepped from behind the rocks—and the outlaw and the captain of the Rangers stood looking at one another across the yawning gulf, under the blaze of the burning sunshine.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### At Bay!

THE Rio Kid, with graceful politeness, swept off his Stetson in salute to the Ranger captain. That a dozen rifles or more looked at him, from clefts and chinks in the mass of boulders, he well knew, but cared nothing.

Hall stared at him, not acknowledging the salute, his hard-bitten face sour.

Jim Hall, slight in build, though with iron muscles, wiry, active, bow-

legged from incessant riding, hard of feature and ruthless of eye, made a grim figure as he stood there, thick with the dust of weary trails, savage and sour.

Weary of the toiling trail, enraged by constant defeat, embittered by endless disappointments, there was something like personal hatred in the stare of the Ranger.

No outlaw or gunman had ever given him a tenth of the trouble the Rio Kid had given; and it was a bitter memory to Mule-Kick Hall that once, in this long hunt, he had ridden into a trap, and that the lives of his bunch had been at the mercy of the Kid and a gang of outcast Apaches. The Kid had spared them, and parted from his Redskin allies; and the knowledge that he had been spared by the outlaw whom he hunted for his life, was gall and wormwood to Jim Hall.

"Say, you sure look as if you'd got a grouch, Jim!" said the Kid amiably. "Mean to say you ain't enjoying this hyer lecture pappar in the Mal Pais?"

There was a chuckle from behind the boulders where the Rangers lay in cover.

"That Kid is sure a cool cuss!" said the voice of Pecos Pete.

Mule-Kick Hall glared round, and the chuckling died away. He turned his keen, bitter eyes under the beetling brows, on the Kid again.

"Your jig's up, Kid!" he said abruptly.

"That your idea?" asked the Kid pleasantly.

"We've got you cinched!" growled Hall. "You're wise to it, as well as I am, that you can't get off that meson. It's surrounded—watched on all sides. Make a break on any side, and you'll see that your goose is cooked!"

"It's sure kind of you to put me wise to it," said the Kid gravely. "You're the friend I want in this hyer fix, Jim Hall."

Hall scowled.

"You always was a guy for shooting off your mouth!" he growled. "Smart cracks won't buy you anything! I allow you can give us some trouble cinching you; but you can't get away, and you know it! What's the good of burning powder, Kid?"

"I ain't honing to burn powder, feller," said the Kid. "All I'm asking for is an open trail. I've sure got business in other parts of Texas, and I'd give a whole heap of dollars, I sure would, to go and see to it."

There was another chuckle, stilled by another scowl from Hall.

"Talk sense, Kid!" said the Ranger captain. "You're our mutton! Give us your guns, and we'll ride you to town, and you'll take your chance with a fair trial. Ain't that better than being shot up in the Mal Pais?"

"I guess not." The Kid shook his head. "I ain't shot up yet, Jim Hall, and I guess when the time comes I'm going out kicking. That for your fair trial at the county town!" He snapped his fingers. "I guess the guys would be in such a hurry to string up the Rio Kid, that they wouldn't worry a whole lot about finding him guilty first. Why, the hold-up at Sasafra, and shooting the marshal there, would be enough to hang a man—and I never heard of it till a week after it had happened. But if I told the judge that how much would he bank on it?"

"Come off!" growled Hall. "You're wanted for that, as well as for a hundred other things!"

"You've said it!" agreed the Kid.



"But I guess I'd rather take my chance in the Mal Pais."

Hall gave him a bitter look.

"You'll be shot up, Kid. I'm offering you as good a chance as an outlaw has a right to. But if we burn powder you're a gone soon. I ain't saying that you won't shoot up a few of my bunch first. But we'll get you sure, and you're a dead man!"

"Likely enough!" said the Kid coolly. "I sure take it as a big compliment that you've brought all your bunch after me, Jim Hall. I guess you've got the whole family there, playing possum behind them rocks. It

the boulders. Every man in the bunch was eager to come on, in the face of death. But Jim Hall's word was law; his resolution like iron.

Through weary hour after hour he kept his men in cover, in spite of heat and impatience, and angry growling and growling. And the Kid, while he was annoyed, admired Hall for his patience and strategy. Mule-Kick Hall was waiting for sundown. The Kid could not get away from the surrounded mesa—that was impossible. There was time to be patient. And when darkness fell on the Mal Pais the passage of the barranca would not be

grew too dim for discernment, and darkness brooded over the evil country—that seemed more evil and forbidding than ever under the black mask of night!

Unwinking, the Kid's eyes watched; but now he depended more on his ears than his eyes. Darkness, and two hours before the moon came up over the valley of the Rio Grande—darkness and dire danger for the beleaguered Kid.

From the darkness sounds of foes in motion—the long wait was over, the weary watching at an end. Slight sounds, cautious sounds—but enough for the ears of the Kid, keen as those of a hiding coyote—sounds of men who crept from cover, who crept over barren, baked earth, jostled against rocks, muttered in the night; crept ever closer and closer to the narrowest section of the great barranca, the six-foot rift that lay in front of the kid. And still the Kid held his fire. Waiting had in the gloom at random was not in the kid's line, especially



**HELPING AN ENEMY!** The Rio Kid leaned forward from his saddle and grasped the collar of the Texas Ranger as he floated by. Though it meant risking his own life in the flood in helping an enemy, the Kid could not see a white man drown if it was possible to save him. (See Chapter 4.)

sure shows that you think a lot of me!"

"Is it a cinch?" demanded Hall.

"Nope."

The Kid laughed lightly.

"You don't get me as easy as all that, Jim. Not by a jugful! I guess you'd rather talk turkey than jump over that barranca with my rifle talking to you. But you don't get home with it."

Hall gritted his teeth.

"Wait, then!" he said tersely.

He dropped into cover again, and simultaneously the Rio Kid hunted cover behind his rock. There was a crackling of rifle fire in the hot afternoon. The Kid did not reply to it. The Kid had to count his cartridges now, and he was not disposed to waste a shot. He waited for the Rangers to come out into the open.

But they did not come out.

From time to time the Kid heard grumbling voices and angry curses, as the Rangers sweated in heat behind

one of such fearful peril. In the dark the Kid's guns were not likely to take so terrible a toll.

"Dog-gone him!" growled the Kid.

It was weary waiting for the Kid, as well as for the Rangers. He could not venture to leave the barranca unwatched. Once the enemy were across that chain the odds at close quarters would be too much for the Kid to hope for even a fighting chance. He was at the end of his rope; and he was chained to the one spot where his foes could get at him.

The Kid, cursing the iron patience of Jim Hall, exercised his own patience and waited and watched.

The sun went down in a blaze of purple and gold behind the Mal Pais. Shadows lengthened in canyon and gulch. Dimmer and dimmer grew the mesa, and the tangled chaparral that clothed it, the rugged slopes, and the heaped boulders where the Rangers lay sweating.

Dimmer and dimmer—till shapes

with cartridges running short. When the Kid burned powder it would be to some effect.

The grinding of heavy boots as they landed—a man had leaped the barranca. From the Kid's rifle streamed flame and smoke, and a black shadow that loomed in the night was blotted out. High and piercing, a cry arose, as that black shadow toppled over the edge of the barranca, and hurtled down into space. From the Texas Rangers came a roar of fury and a burst of fire, drowning the last yell of the man who had gone down to his death.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**  
Across the Barranca!

**M**ULE-KICK HALL spat out curses.

The taunting laugh of the Rio Kid replied.

Crack! Crack!

The shots followed the laugh of the boy outlaw. A yelling Ranger dropped.

back from the edge of the barranca and crawled away, and another clapped a hand to his head, where half an ear had been torn away.

It seemed as if the Kid could see in the dark; and, indeed, he could, for the faintest shadow that stirred was enough for the Kid. And when he pulled trigger he knew where the lead would go.

Long rang the reckless laugh of the boy outlaw.

"Say you 'uns! You don't seem in a dog-goned hurry!" he called out. "I'll say you're sure taking your time! Say, Jim Hall, you're the guy that always gets his man! Your man's here, and by the great horned toad he's ready and waiting. Why ain't you getting him?"

Hall swore furiously.

But when his angry voice ceased the Kid was doubly watchful. The darkness that wrapped the Rangers wrapped also the Kid, and he had crept closer to the barranca—so close that even in the deep murk no man could leap it without the Kid's eye spotting him. And eye and finger-trigger were as one. Only at that spot could a man on foot cross; and the Kid held all the cards so long as his cartridges lasted.

Silence from the Rangers, and a mutter of a deep, low voice—too low for the Kid to hope to catch the words. But it was Hall's voice—and the Kid would have given much to hear what order he was giving his men. For he knew that Hall was as wily as an Apache, as full of unexpected tricks as an unbroken cayuse. That rush across the rift in the darkness had been stopped. Hall had counted on the cover of the night, but its friendly cloak had not served him. What was the next move? The Kid boned to know.

But he did not know till a sudden clatter of hoofbeats from the night enlightened him.

"Gee!" breathed the Kid.

There was a sudden burst of fire from the Rangers, searching the rocks across the barranca.

The Kid, lying low, cared nothing for the whizzing lead.

But for that rush of hoofbeats he cared much; he knew what it meant.

While the Rangers held him pinned to the narrow rift, chained there to guard it against their crossing, one bold horseman, a distance farther along the barranca, was going to leap.

In the daylight the Kid's rifle would have picked him off like a wild turkey in the chapparal. In the darkness, at the distance, he was invisible. No shot from the Kid could stop him; and if the barranca itself could not stop him he would cross.

The Kid gave a low whistle—of admiration more than anything else.

For the leap in the darkness, across a gulf of great width and fatal depth, was the deed of a man who recked nothing of life. The chances of making the jump in safety were one in a thousand.

He knew who the reckless horseman was. In all Texas, the Kid figured, there were two men who would have taken such a desperate chance. One of them was the Rio Kid, the other was Mule-Kick Hall, captain of the Texas Rangers. It was Jim Hall who, fifty yards further along the barranca, out of the Kid's fire, was galloping to the mad leap.

It was a mad leap—a leap to death. The Kid waited to hear the crash of horse and rider into the depths of the barranca. Only a wonderful turn of

fortune could have made such a leap a success—all the chances were against making the grade.

There was a dog's chance—and that was all. But if that dog's chance materialised the Kid had an enemy behind him—a determined enemy in his last refuge—at close quarters. Stalking off the bunch of Rangers was a thing of the past. If Jim Hall made the grade the Kid's game was up—bullets from behind his cover would soon be humming about his ears. For that chance Mule-Kick Hall was taking his life in his hands, leaping the barranca in the dark, in the shadow of the wings of the Angel of Death.

"Gee!" repeated the Kid. "Some cuss! I'll say he's got sand!"

The Rangers ceased fire again. They were listening, as anxiously as the Kid, to the crashing hoofbeats that approached an edge that the rider could barely see in the gloom, to leap towards another edge that was wholly invisible. Only a man of iron could have essayed the feat—and not one in a thousand could have got away with it. Was Jim Hall getting away with it?

On the answer to that question depended the outcome of the Rio Kid's last struggle for life and liberty.

Clatter, clatter!

A second of silence.

No eye could follow the horseman in the clinging darkness; but in that breathless second of silence the Kid and his foes knew that the horseman had taken off for the leap; that the madly-driven broncho was springing across the gulf, suspended for the instant in space.

Crash!

It was a din of landing hoofs.

Hoofs that rang and crashed and clattered on the near side of the barranca—the Kid's side. Clatter, clatter! of hoofs vainly striving to make good a precarious landing, then the long-drawn terrified squeal of a horse that fell helplessly back and crashed down through space.

Crash! far on the rocks at the bottom of the barranca—and silence! The horse had gone down—but the rider?

Had Mule-Kick Hall gone down with the falling horse? It was all Texas to a silver dollar that he had.

And yet—

Sounds came through the night, and they came on the Kid's side of the barranca—sounds of shuffling and scuffling—of a man who dragged himself from the edge of death.

The Rangers heard those sounds as well as the Kid. The excited voice of Pecos Pete yelled frantically.

"Say, you 'uns! He's sure made the grade!"

There was a shout of triumph from the Rangers.

Mule-Kick Hall had made the grade. With a thousand chances to one against success the thousandth chance had materialised. The horse had gone down to death; the rider had flung himself over the neck and head of the falling broncho, catching at rocks and dragging himself to life. Mule-Kick Hall was across the barranca.

"Jumpin' gophers!" murmured the Kid. "I guess that guy's got sand—he sure has! I'll tell the world he's some cuss!"

But the Kid had no time to expend in admiring the feat performed by his enemy. For Mule-Kick Hall was on the wrong side of his defences now, and coming at him in the darkness. And the Kid crept back from cover, back from the barranca that was no longer a defence, into the tangled chapparal where he had left his mustang. And as

he went a rifle spat fire in the darkness, lighting it with rapid flashes, and spattering lead scattered out the rocks where the Kid had been a minute before. Mule-Kick Hall had lost no time in getting to close quarters.

He did not, it was probable, figure on finding the Kid still there. He cared little either way. If the Kid was there it was man to man—while the Rangers were coming across the rift. If he was not there the morrow would see him hunted out of the deepest recesses of that patch of chapparal, his last hiding-place, from which there was no further retreat. Either way, Mule-Kick Hall had triumphed—the Kid was at the end of his rope—and the Ranger who boasted that he never failed to get his man would make his words good.

The Kid was not there—darkness and the chapparal had swallowed him.

Hall shouted across to his men:

"Hump it, you 'uns!"

One by one the Rangers came across the narrow rift and joined their leader. Twenty-five men were gathered there, ready for the last hunt that was to begin when the morning sun lighted the gloom of the chapparal. The end was in sight now. Mule-Kick Hall had made the grade; and the sun that was soon to rise on the Mal Pais would light the last day of the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

From the Jaws of Death!

**T**HE Rio Kid looked at the red dawn over the Mal Pais and thought of the sunset that he was never to see, and his lip curled with reckless disdain.

Now that the cinch had come, the Kid was ready to face it. He had had a long run, and if his luck had petered out he was not the galoot to complain. Fortune had stood his friend for a long time, and he had no kick coming.

The Kid did not deceive himself—he knew that the jig was up. But never would the Kid be taken to judgment bound on the back of a broncho, with gyves on his wrists—never that while his finger could press a trigger, or his hand grip a bowie-knife. That burning morning was to see the Kid's last fight—a fight to the death!

His only solace—if solace it was—was that he would go on the long trail in goodly company. Mule-Kick Hall first, if he could get him, then as many of the bunch as Fate allowed; and the Kid reckoned that it would be a good number. When they talked in the cow-towns of the Rio Kid's last fight, he vowed that they should have something worth chewing the rag about.

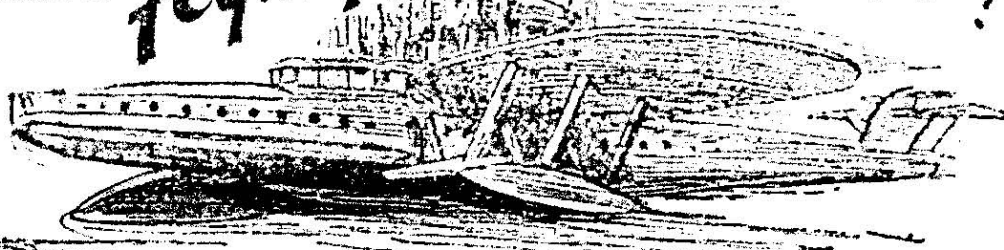
The sky that for weeks had been burning blue, without a cloud, shedding merciless heat on the Mal Pais, was that morning leaden, but hotter than ever. Away to the south, on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, black clouds were banked, inky battalions that shadowed the burning sunlight. Slowly, imperceptibly, those black masses were edging towards the Mal Pais. But the Kid did not heed them or notice them; he had other matters to occupy his mind. For the dawn was followed by the crack of firearms—the hunt was up.

In the thick chapparal the heat was intense; the flies buzzed in uncounted myriads. Never for a moment was the Kid—clusive as ever—out of sound of his enemies. Through and through that patch of chapparal, not half a square mile in extent, that covered the

*(Continued at foot of next page.)*



# The BIGGEST Flying Boat in the WORLD!



The Dox, the new monster flying boat, weighing seventy-nine tons when fully laden, and capable of lifting from and landing on the ocean like a seagull, has startled the world by its magnitude. In this article, our contributor tells you all about this leviathan of the skies!

**A** FEW years ago—twenty-four, to be exact—people who were interested in aeroplanes were awfully excited because someone had more or less successfully made some tests with a simple glider which could float upon the water and rise therefrom into the air.

This wonderful biplane glider was fitted with hollow wooden pontoons, or floats, and a motor-boat had to tow it along the water until the glider got up sufficient speed to mount into the air. It wasn't a very posh affair. In fact, it was rather funny when you think of it in comparison with the enormous seaplanes, or flying-boats that we have to-day. But it was the forerunner of the mighty Dox!

Haven't you heard of the Dox? They built it in Germany, and tested it a very short while ago. It came through the tests with great honours, and in doing so pretty well upset most of the prevailing notions concerning the construction of such vessels.

It is the biggest flying-boat in the world, made of grey steel, 150 feet long, and weighs 34 tons. When the great air-boat is loaded to capacity they reckon it will be able to carry in the air forty-five tons of people and baggage.

There are a couple of enormous wings to this monster—wings 150 feet from tip to tip, and ten feet thick. The wings have a passage-way through them, so that the mechanics can walk from turret to turret as necessary. There are six of these turrets projecting from the two colossal wings, and each turret is equipped with two 500 horse-power engines.

All told, that means that the Dox has twelve engines, with a total horse-power of 6,000. Some "kick" to this amazing leviathan of the air! All the engines are controlled by two pilots,

under the orders of the captain and the flying-boat's navigating officer in the chart-room.

### The Trial Flight!

Two engineers control the engine-room dials, and the way the Dox answers to its helm is simply marvellous. Two levers only to command all that horse-power, and yet the tremendous vessel is as docile as a well-trained horse—with the power of 6,000 horses in its "innards"!

Inside the body of the flying-boat are the captain's bridge, a luxurious and spacious saloon for one hundred passengers, and accommodation for all their luggage, in addition to space for other cargo. So you see the Dox isn't simply a gigantic toy or experiment. It is going to enter into serious competition with ordinary air-craft, and when it first rose from the water, in July, it at once took its place at the very front of the world's big flying-boats.

For two and a half years the Dox had been guarded in her gigantic shed at Friedrichshafen. For two and a half years the strictest secrecy had been maintained on every point concerning the marvellous flying-boat that was slowly growing up as an army of expert mechanics laboured to carry out the ideas of its inventor and designer. You can imagine the pride of Dr. Dornier, who designed it all, when, on that morning last July, the very last finishing touch having been given to his giant, the child of his skill slid slowly and stately down to the water's edge.

The tremendous gates of the shed that had hidden the Dox through thirty strenuous months slid open as Dr. Dornier pressed a button. The captive was free to take to the water and then the air, at last!

A second button was pressed, and the Dox moved out—to the trial flight that was to be witnessed by air experts gathered from all the ends of the earth. The twelve engines roared, the picked crew of twenty men settled in their appointed places. Forty eager hands were ready to do their bit, and then the Dox was racing full-pace across the waters of the great lake where it was to show its paces.

### A Sheer Success!

And show them it did. For a matter of two hours its captain kept the enormous flying-boat racing on the water, twisting, dodging, carrying out with the greatest readiness every demand of the skipper.

The leviathan wings stood the strain, and then, after a final run of 500 yards, at a speed of sixty miles an hour, the Dox, with her thirty-four tons dead weight, mounted up from the churning water and soared like a monster bird. Up, up it went, and then came the testing descent. Gracefully the flying-boat landed on the water again.

Three times the test was repeated, and this first of a projected fleet of tremendous flying-boats had proved itself a sheer success. And it is less than twenty-six years ago that Orville Wright managed his historic flight of twelve seconds—a flight which he describes, in his own words, as "the first in which a machine carrying a man had raised itself into the air by its own power in free flight, had sailed forward on a level course without reduction of speed, and had finally landed without being wrecked!"

And now the Dox has arrived, to astound the world by its magnitude!

(Next week: "THE GREATEST LINERS!")

(Continued from previous page.)

summit of the mesa, the Rangers hunted him, quartering the ground like hunting-dogs for their prey.

But the Kid, it had been said of old, was a bad man to crowd.

More than one Ranger, hunting hard, found what he sought and did not live to repent it.

For the Kid was desperate now, and he gave as was given to him. It was a fight to the death; and death stalked abroad under the burning heat that morning on the chaparral high up in the Mal Pais.

And at the burning noontide the hunt was still hot, and the Kid was not yet cinched.

Mule-Kick Hall was grinding his

teeth with rage; and his weary and infuriated men muttering curses, save those who had come too close to their quarry and would never speak again.

Without a pause, unrelenting, the hunt went on, ever closer and closer till a ring of savage men, maddened and merciless, surrounded the clump of thicket where the Kid lay beside his mustang, a six-gun in either hand, weary desperation in his face, and the rustle of the death angel's wings audible in his ears.

One more rush, one desperate hand-to-hand grapple, and the hunt was over—the thing was done. Then the name of the boy outlaw would be only a memory on the banks of the Rio Grande.

And then, like a roar of sudden artillery, it came! The cloud burst, the child of the burning heat, for which the Kid had hoped for long days, and which had ever disappointed him—and which he had now forgotten in his last desperate hour. It came to remind him that while there was life there was hope—even a few minutes of life. With a roar and a crash, with sudden torrents of rain like a spilt ocean, it came.

Blackness over the leaden sky—blackness and raging water. The Mal Pais, dry as bone under days of drought, sucked up the water in seas. But still it came—pouring, splashing, raging. Every arroyo, where the sand and stones had baked dry, burning to the

(Continued on next page.)

**CORNERING THE KID!**

*(Continued from page 21.)*

touch, was a foaming torrent; every canyon a river; every hollow a tossing lake. The deep barranca at the foot of the mesa swelled and roared with foaming waters.

On the plain, men who had watched the Mal Pais to cut off the escape of the Kid were riding frantically for shelter. In the canyons and ravines, horsemen rode wildly to escape the rush of the foaming waters—which they did not always escape. Fodies of horses, bodies of men, dashed among uprooted trees and torn branches in the whirling floods.

Beaten on by heavy rains, as by blows of a giant's hands, dashed to the skin in two seconds, the Rio Kid grinned gleefully.

His last hope—which he had forgotten—had come in time. Rained from the heavens was landing, growing, falling under a smog that was like a smelter's chimney in its form. Trees crashed and split, branches were torn away.

Little cared the Kid. Five more minutes, and that final rush of the Rangers would have overpowered him, and he would have gone down under slavering bolts, his guns spitting fire to the last.

Where were the Rangers now?

Beaten and beaten, buffeted and bewildered, the sport of the mighty wind that rocked the Mal Pais to its rocky foundations.

Through falling rain that was like thick sheets of water, the Kid had glimpses of staggering figures, of men lying prone, of men pinned under fallen trees, of men who rode or ran. One man plunged past the Kid within a foot of him, unseeing.

In that mad battle of unchained elements human conflict was impossible, the thought of it impossible. The Kid was not thinking of it. His guns were jammed in his holsters, his hand was on the bridle of the grey Mustang. He fought a way through landing bushes and crashing trees, and if he had glimpses of his enemies he did not heed them any more than they heeded him.

Water by the thousand tons was falling. He reached the barranca on the lower side of the mesa and found it a raging torrent, roaring over the brain. The slope up which the Rangers had come to reach him was flooded now. Water flowed and rushed and roared among the boulders where they had crept in cover.

A thousand perils lay that way. But that was the way of the Rio Kid—the way out of the Mal Pais—the way to the plains and freedom.

He leaped the foaming barranca and rode down the slope, with raging water swirling up to his girths. The dark rain was almost that of night, lighted for guttering sparks by the blaze of lightning that rived the black masses overhead like a flashing knife.

Dusty coal, logs, struggling horses, floating carcasses, splashing fragments accompanied the Kid in his wild ride—wild as he entered into the narrow canyon that led down to the plains on the edge of the Mal Pais. For here, in narrower limits, the flood deepened, dashing and roaring against steep, rocky walls; and at times the grey mustang was swimming.

More than once from the lightning-riven gloom a body whirled into the Kid's sight and vanished again. And when a swirl of water dashed another against his horse the Kid would have shoved it aside; but hands clung to

him, and a hoarse voice panted for help. And the Kid realized that this was not a dead man, but a living one at his last gasp.

Who he was the Kid did not know; only he knew that he must be a fool, for in the Mal Pais all were his foes. And with all his strength, all his nerve—needed to save his own life in that mad onslaught of elemental fury—the Kid grasped the dithering man and held him fast. With a stroke of his slinky arm he dragged the man across the grey mustang, and Side-Kicker fought gallantly on with a double burden.

Swimming at intervals, finding precarious foothold at other times, the grey mustang fought on, amid whirling logs and uprooted trees, dashed again and again upon rocky walls by the swirling flood.

How the Kid kept the saddle, how the mustang kept his feet, the boy outlaw never knew; but he knew that both of them were paying every ounce into the fight for life, and that courage and iron resolve won through at last.

From the roaring flood that rushed down the canyon the Rio Kid emerged at last, dazed and dizzy, more dead than alive—but alive.

Still with the helpless man sprawled across the horse before him, the Kid leaped himself on the plain, his horse slipping deep in rushing water, but safe at last.

Still the rain torrents lashed and roared, and the fierce wind beat and clutched; but he was out of the Mal Pais, out of the foaming freshets and falling rocks and falling trees.

And the Kid pushed on to a ridge of high ground above the flood, halted his weary horse, dismounted, and lifted down the man he had saved, and laid him tenderly enough in the grass.

"I guess you'll be O.K. there, feller," said the Kid. "This hyer rookus won't last a heap long. I'll say that your friends will find you—and if I don't lift the horizon mighty quick they'll sure find me at the same time! And I guess I don't want any more Mule-Kick Hail in mine!"

And then, as he peered at the man he had saved, the Rio Kid ejaculated:

"Jumping gophers!"

And Mule-Kick Hall—disabled, spent, defenseless—stared up with bitter eyes at the man who had saved him.

"You!" said the Kid thoughtfully; then he laughed.

"Don't-gone it, if I'd knowed it was you I'd have hooked you out of that hell all the same! Any man in Texas will tell you that the Rio Kid is a gold-darned gink! I guess if I wasn't plumb loco, Jim Hall, you'd get yours now, right where you live!"

"Shoot!" said the Ranger.

The Kid shook his head.

"Not any!" he answered. "It's me for the trail; and you, I reckon, can lie here till your guys find you and pick you up. Then you can sure beat it back to the town and tell the world that the Rio Kid never figured that you was worth his lead. So-long, Jim Hall! And next time you tell Texas that you always get your man, remember the Mal Pais and the Rio Kid!"

And, with the Ranger's bitter eyes following him, the Rio Kid mounted the mustang again, cracked his quirs, and disappeared in the dimness of swamping rain.

THE END.

*(Back once again on the trail, the Rio Kid seeks adventure. He finds it, sure enough, and of the most thrilling variety. Look out for: "FIVE HUNDRED DOLLAR SMITH," a roaring tale of Western adventure.)*

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