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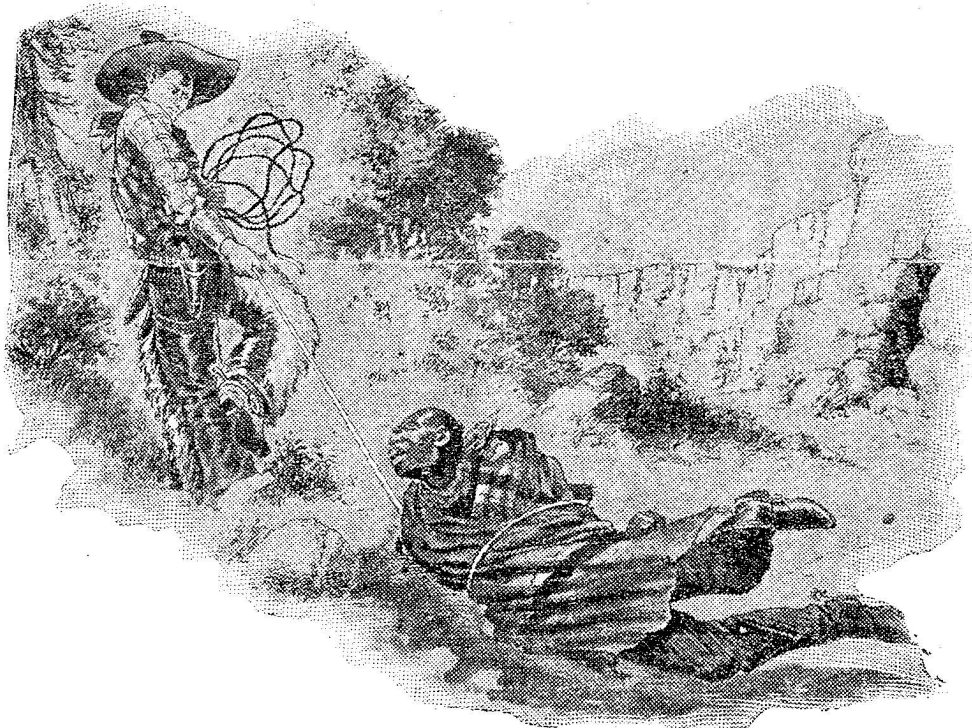
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Black George, the mysterious and elusive road-agent, is brought to justice at last by none other than a boy outlaw, the Rio Kid!



TRAPPING AN OUTLAW!

BY RALPH REDWAY.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Dollars on the Trail!

"I GUESS I'll wait outside, sir!" said the Rio Kid, with a grin. "The marshal of Kicking Mule don't love this baby."

Colonel Sanderson smiled, as he drew rein outside the marshal's office on Main Street at Kicking Mule.

"You've said it!" he agreed.

He dismounted, hitched his horse to the post, and strode into the marshal's office.

The Rio Kid remained in the saddle.

From where he sat on the mustang, in the bright sunshine of the dusty street of Kicking Mule, he could see into the frame building; and he could be seen.

Seth Starbuck, the marshal, glanced past his caller, and his eyes rested on the horseman outside, for a moment or two, with a deadly glint in them. His hand made a motion towards his gun; but he checked it. Taking, openly at least, no heed of the boy puncher, Starbuck greeted the boss of the Bar-One ranch.

"Say, I'm sure glad to see you riding again, rancher," he said, though he did not look glad. He pushed a chair towards the Bar-One boss, and sat down himself on his desk. "You got over the damage?"

"I guess so; though it was a close call," said Sanderson. "Black George meant to make it last sickness for me; and he would have got away with it, if that puncher outside hadn't been along. He sure scared the road-agent off."

Starbuck's bearded lip curled.

"I allow I don't reckon that Black

George would be a whole lot feared of that kid puncher," he said with a sneer.

"He beat it, at any rate," said the rancher curtly, "and the puncher saved my life. But that ain't what I've come to tell you, Starbuck."

"Shoot!" said Starbuck, with equal curtness.

"I'm buying steers on the Joshua-A ranch," said Sanderson. "A deal with Tom Carter of the Joshua-A. I'm sending to Juniper for fifteen thousand dollars from the bank."

"Next?"

"Fifteen thousand dollars don't grow on every clump of sassafras," said the rancher. "I guess I don't want Black George to cinch it on the trail. I want to know what you're doing about that road-agent. I ain't the only hombre in this section who allows that it's time he was roped in and strung up."

Starbuck shrugged his shoulders.

"I reckon if any guy in Kicking Mule can cinch that fire-bug, Black George, I'll hand over the office of marshal to him," he said. "That's all there is to it. He don't give a galoot a chance. I guess I hear a whole jugful about not roping in that coon. That Ranger guy you sent for didn't have better luck. Black George shot him up on the trail. He ain't never shot me up, anyhow."

Colonel Sanderson's keen eyes, under his grizzled brows, dwelt curiously on the hard face of the man before him, who looked so much more like a gunman than a town marshal.

"That's so!" he assented. "But there's marshals and sheriffs in Texas who'd call it pie to rope him in. A black coon—it ain't as if he was a white man with a mask on his face. A nigger—and there ain't many niggers in

this part of Texas, and not one in Kicking Mule. How does he keep out of sight all the time?"

"How's a guy to guess?" grunted the marshal. "He does keep outer sight—anyhow he ain't never seen. He gets his news from some scallywag in cahoots with him, and you know the hombre I suspect—" The marshal made a gesture towards the horseman waiting in the street.

"Guff!" said the rancher. "That kid puncher is straight as a string. Forget that, marshal."

"He's got you fooled, some," said Starbuck sourly.

"I guess he wasn't fooling, when he stood by me, and kept that murdering coon off me," said Sanderson. "Forget it, I'm telling you. Anyhow he don't matter—it's the fifteen thousand dollars I'm thinking of."

"If that puncher knows, I guess Black George will get wise to it," said the marshal obstinately.

"Guff!" snorted Sanderson. "Leave him out, I'm telling you. I want you to advise me as marshal of this burg. I could send a bunch of cowmen to Juniper to bring the money from the bank; but I can't easily spare them. You reckon the dollars could be brought in secret?"

The marshal seemed to reflect. "If Black George gets wind of fifteen thousand dollars on the Juniper stage, I guess he will lay for the hearse," he said. "There ain't no two ways about that. It's a long trail and a lonely one; and he's stopped the stage there often enough. But if the dollars was packed secret, say under the driver's seat, and nothing said till after they got

here, I guess even that fire-bug could be fooled."

"Now you're talking!" agreed the rancher.

"But I guess you want to keep it dark," added Starbuck. "If that kid puncher gets wise to it, I guess—"

Sanderson interrupted him. "I'm telling you I trust that boy, and I don't aim to keep it secret from him. I can trust Jerry Cook; and I reckon I'll get him to take the dollars aboard in one of the horse-bags! Even if Black George holds up the stage, there ain't any reason why he should look into the horse bags, I reckon."

"There surely ain't!" agreed the marshal, "and I guess I'll let some of my deputies keep an eye on the trail, too, when the dollars are sent. When you aim to send for them?"

"I'm sending a messenger to the bank this morning. They'll fix it with Jerry Cook, and get the boodle on board by the stage this afternoon. But I'm telling you, Seth Starbuck, I ain't feeling easy in my mind, till Jerry drives the hearse into Kicking Mule."

There was a glimmer in the marshal's eyes for a moment.

"I guess it will be O.K.," he said. "But if Black George gets wise to it, you won't have to look further'n that kid puncher for the guy that spilled the beans."

"You sure got a grouch agin that puncher, Starbuck," said the rancher, laughing. "Well, it's settled, and I'll be getting back to the ranch; I got to see Mesquite started for Juniper."

And with a nod to the marshal, Colonel Sanderson strode out of the office, and remounted his pinto. He rode away with the Rio Kid; and the marshal, standing in the doorway of his office, looked after them as they went, with a glimmer in his eyes, and a sour grin on his hard face.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Kid on Hand!

"BANKING on it?" asked the rancher, with a smile, when the two riders were clear of Kicking Mule.

The Rio Kid's face was dark with thought.

He shook his head. "I ain't banking on it, sir," he said quietly. "But I guess if this racket don't put paid to Black George, nothing will. I'll tell all Texas that marshal guy is in cahoots with the road-agent, and there ain't no two ways about it."

"Jest what he allows about you," smiled Sanderson.

The Kid nodded. "Sure, and that lets him out," he said. "When Black George lays for the Juniper stage this afternoon, and roots in the horse-bags for the dollars, Starbuck will be able to say that he warned you agin me. It's sure a cute game when he's the hombre all the time that puts the road-agent wise."

"I ain't sure of that," said the rancher. "I allows you've made out a case, and I'm giving you a chance to prove it up, but that's all."

"That's all I want," said the Kid. "Boss, there ain't nary doubt about it in my mind. First day I struck Kicking Mule I followed Black George's trail right to the town; and as it don't seem possible that a black coon could ride into Kicking Mule, I guess his side-partner, the marshal, was mad as a hornet when I told him, and pulled his gun on me; and he's been after my scalp ever since he knowed I was trailing Black George."

The Kid knitted his brows.

"I ain't saying I'm wise to the whole game," he said, "I ain't. I trailed the marshal up to a cave in the hills, and found the can of black paint he keeps there—that's for disguising his hoss, I reckon. But the marshal ain't never been seen on a black hoss, and the road-agent always rides a hoss as black as the ace of spades—as black as his own dog-goned face. But he never lent his hoss to Black George that time—for the trail showed only one hoss, the marshal's, and nary a sign of a man on foot—and I own up the whole thing's got me beat. But I reckon the marshal never went to the cave jest for a little pease on his lonesome—no, sir. I sure want to know."

They rode on in silence for some minutes, approaching the fork in the trail.

The Kid spoke again at last.

"It's a dog-gone puzzle, and it's got me beat to a frazzle," he said. "But there's sure one thing clear to my mind, sir, and that is that Seth Starbuck is playing Black George's game. How he gets in touch with the road-agent I ain't guessing, but he does it, and his stamping-ground is that cave in the hills. If I don't miss my guess, Starbuck will be heading for that same spot, same as he did afore, in plenty time for Black George to hold up the stage and cinch them dollars out of the horse-bags."

"Mobbe," said the rancher, but his tone was doubtful.

"I ain't trailing him this time," said the Kid quietly. "I'm going to be there first. If the marshal comes up to that cave to-day, he'll sure find me on the watch, and if I don't get wise to the game that's going on, I'll sell my cayuse, and buy me a posada, and sell pulque to Greasers, I sure will."

"Luck!" said the rancher; and they parted at the fork of the trails, Colonel Sanderson riding on towards the Bar-One Ranch, and the Kid turning from the trail into the thickly-wooded hill-side.

In a few moments the Kid was lost to sight in the woods and scrubs. Once in the thick brush, he dismounted, and led Side-Kicker by the bridle.

The brush was dense, and no trail was marked; but the Kid could have found his way blindfold, after once covering the ground. And as he went he was careful to leave no sign to betray the fact that a horseman had already gone that way up the hill. If the marshal came that way, he was unlikely to ride in precisely the footsteps of the Kid; but if he did, the Kid left no sign to meet his eyes.

For several miles the Kid wound his way through the trackless brush till he reached an open space before a towering mass of cliff-like rocks.

In the face of the rock opened a cave, the cave to which the Kid, a few days before, had trailed the marshal of Kicking Mule.

Carefully the Kid concealed his mustang in a deep hollow in the thick of the brush. He could rely on Side-Kicker to keep motionless and silent till he heard his master's call. He unhooked the coiled riata from the saddle before he left the mustang.

He crept forward on foot, keeping carefully in cover, till he reached a favourable spot for watching the cave, without revealing his presence.

Then he settled down to wait.

It was weary waiting. Hours passed, the silence broken only by the buzz of insects in the brush.

But the Kid was as patient as an Apache watching for an enemy. He hardly stirred as the long minutes passed.

He was rewarded at last.

From the thick of the brush came a sound of crackling twigs as a horseman pushed his way through.

The Kid's eyes glittered.

A horseman was coming up the hill, and who could be approaching that lonely, almost inaccessible spot except the man he was expecting?

He waited, listening. From where he lay on the edge of the brush he could scan the whole of the open space in front of the cliff where the cave opened.

"Sho!" murmured the Kid.

The horseman pushed out of the brush and crossed the open tract to the cave. It was Seth Starbuck, the marshal of Kicking Mule, mounted on his brown horse. The marshal looked neither to the right nor the left, plainly not having the faintest suspicion that there was any human being within miles of him. He reached the cliff, dismounted at the mouth of the cave, and led the brown horse in.

The Kid breathed quickly.

He had figured correctly. Starbuck, after hearing from the rancher of the dollars that were coming on the stage that afternoon, had hit for the lonely cave in the hills. For what purpose, unless to put Black George wise to the plunder?

And yet, where was the black road-agent? The Kid had watched the cave for long hours, and there had been no sign of life there; he was sure that it was untenanted. Days ago he had explored the cave, and found no sign of camping. That was not the road-agent's den; it was simply a place of appointment, the Kid reckoned. Was Black George coming to meet the marshal there? It seemed the only explanation; yet the meeting might have taken place as safely and more easily in the thick woods lower down the hill. But the Kid was done with guessing and surmising; he was there to watch and to see.

The marshal of Kicking Mule and his horse had disappeared into the cave. There was no sound of anyone approaching. The woods were silent and still in the afternoon sunshine. The Kid waited with grim patience and watched. From the cave came sounds at last, and a man appeared in the opening, leading out a coal-black horse by the bridle.

And it was all the Kid could do to suppress the cry of amazement that rose to his lips.

For the man who appeared from the cave was not the marshal of Kicking Mule; he was a negro, dressed in a Mexican serape belted round his burly form; a Stetson hat pulled low down over his black face.

The Kid stared, almost unbelievably.

He knew that black face, with its flat nose, thick lips, and heavy, thick, bushy brows that overhung the eyes and almost hid them. More than once the Kid had seen the black road-agent.

"Black George!"

The Kid breathed the name.

"Thunder! It's Black George!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Secret of Black George!

BLACK GEORGE led the horse from the cave, and prepared to mount.

The Kid, thunderstruck, watched him, without motion.

For once, the Rio Kid was too surprised to act swiftly. Under his staring eyes, from the cover of the brush, the black road-agent mounted the black horse, evidently to ride down the hill and wait on the stage-trail for the coach from Juniper. It was hard for the Kid to believe his eyes as he saw him.

Where was the marshal? What had become of him? How had the black trail-thief got into the cave from which he now emerged? The Kid could have sworn that the cave had been untenanted all the time he was watching it. Where had the negro sprung from? A vague thought passed through the Kid's mind of some secret tunnel through the cliff, yet in his search of the cave, days ago, he had seen no sign of such a thing. The Kid had to confess that he was beaten to a frazzle.

But, whatever the meaning of the mystery, one fact was clear—there was the black road-agent, the terror of the cow country, not a dozen yards from him, aiming to take the trail and ride down the hill to hold up the Juniper coach. The Kid took a grip on himself and prepared for action.

Silently he rose to his feet in the brush, the riata in his hand. His gun was ready, if it was needed, but the Kid was not the man to shoot a guy down from cover if he could help it. Neither did he want gun-play with Black George. His aim was to rope in the road-agent and make him a prisoner, and ride him into Kicking Mule. There was always time for gun-play if he failed with the rope. But the Kid was not the man to fail with the rope.

The marshal, he figured, was still in the cave, and there was no doubt he would emerge, gun in hand, to the aid of his confederate, when the Kid tackled the black trail-thief. But once the rope was on the black rider, the Kid's gun was ready for the marshal if he chipped in.

Black George was on his horse, riding across the open space, heading for the brush, that in a few moments more would have swallowed him from sight. But those few moments were not granted him.

The Kid stepped clear of the thickets, and his arm swept through the air. The rope whizzed, uncoiling as it flew.

Before the road-agent even knew that he was assailed, the noose of the lasso dropped over his shoulders.

In that second, as the Kid's ready drag tightened the rope, the road-agent's hand flew to a gun, but the grip of the riata fastened his arms down to his sides, with a grip that was like a band of steel.

The next second, Black George was torn from his saddle by the jerk of the rope, and sent crashing to the ground.

A startled yell left his lips as he fell.

The black horse shied, and trotted off a few paces, and stood riderless. The black road-agent sprawled on the rough ground, struggling madly with the gripping noose that was fast round him, pinning his arms to his sides. The Kid's fierce pull on the rope gave him no chance of getting the noose loosened, and with his arms pinned, he could not get at a gun.

The Kid passed the rope to his left hand, a gun was in his right now. His eyes flashed to the opening of the cave, in expectation of seeing the marshal of Kicking Mule emerge. No man in the cave could have failed to hear the infuriated yelling of the lassoed road-agent as he wrenched and struggled with the gripping cord.

But the marshal did not appear.

If he was there, he was keeping close. He was there—he had to be there—unless there was a secret way out of the cave through the cliff behind. But if he was there, the Kid saw nothing and heard nothing of him. Dragging at the rope with his left hand, lifting the gun with his right, the Kid watched

tensely, but the marshal did not show up.

"Carry me home to die!" muttered the Kid in perplexity.

No sound came from the cave—no movement. Was Starbuck watching for a chance to take a treacherous pot-shot? The Kid could not get it—he was puzzled. But he holstered his gun at last, and put both hands to the jerking rope. He was not going to deal with the road-agent in the open, at the risk of a sudden pot-shot from the cave. With a powerful grasp on the rope, he plunged into the brush, dragging the lassoed man after him, rolling and bumping on the rough ground.

Yell after yell of fury came from Black George, as he was dragged helplessly along at the end of the lasso.

The Stetson hat was brushed from his head. The folded serape was torn on rough stones. In a breathless, cursing bundle, the captured road-agent rolled over under the drag of the merciless rope, and was drawn struggling into the cover of the brush.

Then the Kid rapidly coiled the rope, keeping it taut as he coiled, approaching the sprawling road-agent with every turn of it.

In a few moments more, he was standing over the gasping, cursing ruffian. He stooped over him and knotted the rope, giving Black George no chance now of loosening the loop and getting his arms free.

Then he scanned his prisoner.

Still there was no sound or sign from the cave, the marshal of Kicking Mule did not appear. But the Kid was about to learn what had become of the marshal of Kicking Mule.

As he scanned the sprawling, breathless man at his feet, amazement came into the Rio Kid's face.

He gasped.

"Jumpin' snakes!"

The Stetson hat was gone, revealing the head of the road-agent, and instead of the negro's wool that the Kid would have expected to see, he saw a rough shock of hair. It was such hair as had never grown on the cabeza of a black man.

The Kid's almost stunned glance turned on the road-agent.

The eyes were blazing with an almost mad fury. But the features were strangely still.

"Carry me home to die!" muttered the Rio Kid, as he understood at last the strange secret of Black George and the marshal of Kicking Mule—the secret of which no man in the country had dreamed, of which the Kid, keen as he was, had never dreamed.

He stooped, heedless of the furious cursing of the captured man, and ran his fingers over the black face.

Even at a distance of only two or three feet, the Kid could not have doubted that it was the face of a negro. But the touch of his fingers told him a different story.

Why the mysterious road-agent had never worn a mask, to hide the fact that he was a negro, had often puzzled Kicking Mule. But the Kid knew why now.

The black face was itself a mask.

It had never, the Kid reckoned, been made in the cow country. The man had had that mask manufactured in some city, where such things were made for use in the theatres. It was made with great skill, fitting perfectly to the face and the bushy, over-hanging brows completely hid the holes that were left for the eyes, the thick lips concealed the slit that was left for breathing. The neck-scarf met the mask where it ended under the chin. Even now he knew that

it was a cunningly-contrived mask, it was difficult for the Kid to believe that a white man's face was behind the black skin, so complete was the illusion.

"By the great horned toad!" said the Kid blankly.

A fierce oath answered him. The eyes from the black face burned at him with mad rage.

The Kid gave a chuckle.

"And me watching the cave for the marshal after I had roped in this cuss!" he ejaculated. "Kid, you sure are some bonehead!"

Leaving the man securely bound in the lasso, still struggling in the brush, the Rio Kid approached the black horse, and caught it. He knew now the use of the can of black paint in the cave, it had turned the marshal's brown horse into the black steed ridden by the mysterious road-agent. The Kid led the disguised horse into the brush, and tethered him close by the panting trail-thief.

"I guess we're going for a little pasear together, Black George," he remarked pleasantly. "You ain't hitting the stage-trail to-day, and holding up the colonel's dollars, I reckon! No, sir! You're coming for a little pasear with me, and we're hitting for Kicking Mule."

The ruffian panted.

"Ten thousand dollars!" he said hoarsely. "Twenty thousand dollars to release me and keep the secret."

"Whose dollars, feller?" asked the Kid.

"Fifty thousand dollars!" hissed the road-agent desperately.

The Kid whistled.

"Say, you've sure made your pile in the hold-up business, Black George," he remarked. "You sure was on to a good thing, if you've stacked away a pile like that. I'll tell a man!"

"Fifty thousand dollars—I'll hand it to you in Kicking Mule, you're a stranger in this country—ride with fifty thousand dollars in your pocket!" hissed the bound man. "You ain't no call to horn into this."

"I guess I got a powerful call to horn in, feller," said the Kid. "I allowed I'd get you when you shot up that Ranger guy in cold blood on the Juniper trail. You durned skunk, you've killed more men than you've got fingers and toes—men that trusted you, too—men that talked to you friendly in Kicking Mule. I guess you're some poisonous polecat, feller, and you've got to the end of your trail. Can it!"

The Rio Kid swung the captured road-agent to the back of the black horse. With a length of trail-ropes he bound him there. A call brought Side-Kicker trotting to his side. The Kid mounted his mustang, and started down the hill through the brush, leading his prisoner after him with the riata.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Rough Justice!

COLONEL SANDERSON, standing outside the Golden Mule Hotel in the cow-town, looked up the rugged street of Kicking Mule, and his eyes brightened. From the open prairie, a horseman dashed into the town; Mesquite Bill, the foreman of the Bar-One. He was waving his Stetson excitedly in the air, and yelling at the top of his voice, though as yet he was too far off for the rancher to hear what he said.

Others, as well as the colonel, stared at the excited cowman, as he came down the irregular street with a crashing of wild hoofs, in the midst of a cloud of dust. Men came out of the

Golden Mule, and others stopped in the street, to stare at Mesquite Bill.

"It's news!" muttered the colonel.

Clatter! clatter! crash! In a cloud of dust, Mesquite dashed up, and dragged in his broncho so suddenly, that the horse almost fell back on its haunches. Sanderson strode towards him.

"Spill it, Bill!" he snapped.

Mesquite spluttered.

"He's got him!"

"H e — w h o — what—"

"That kid puncher!" howled Mesquite, brandishing his hat again. "He's sure got him — got Black George."

"Got Black George!"

The colonel gasped out the words; they were repeated in a roar by the others who heard the foreman.

"Black George! Cinched?"

"Cinched!" yelled Mesquite. "I'll tell a man! I'll tell the world! Carry me home to die, if that kid puncher ain't riding him into town, tied on his horse! Search me!"

"Great snakes!" gasped Sanderson.

There was a roar in the street of Kicking Mule. The news ran like wild-fire. Carter, of the Joshua-A Ranch, Hanson of the Sundown, came out of the Golden Mule, their faces full of excitement. Sanderson yelled to them:

"Say, he's cinched Black George—that kid puncher of the Bar-One has roped in Black George! He's riding him into town!"

There was a rush along the street towards the prairie trail. Fifty or sixty men had gathered already; others were gathering. It was the wildest excitement that had ever been known in Kicking Mule.

"Black George cinched!" said Carter of the Joshua-A. "Search me! I guess that is some news."

"And that kid puncher's worked the rifle!" exclaimed the boss of the Sundown. "I guess that will make Seth Starbuck look sick, after he's been fooling about that fire-bug for years on end."

"He sure will be sick!" chuckled Mesquite Bill. "But not so sick as Black George, when this town gets hold of that coon."

There was a wild roar.

"Here they come!"

At the end of the street appeared the Kid, riding Side-Kicker, and leading on a rope a horseman who was bound to a black horse. A crowd surged round them already; it thickened as they drew nearer to the hotel, where the three ranchers stood in a group; and the Kid had to slow down. Fierce hands were stretched out towards his prisoner on all sides; but the Kid waved them off.

"Hands off, fellers—hands off! The guy is sure cinched—but I'm handing

him over to my boss: I guess you can leave it to Colonel Sanderson to deal with that galoot! Hands off!"

And the men of Kicking Mule stood back to let the riders pass, closing in and following them. The Rio Kid rode up to the group of ranchers outside the Golden Mule, and lifted his Stetson.

"I guess you want this hyer fire-bug, gentlemen!" he said.

"Lynch him!" came a roar, from almost every throat in Kicking Mule.

in the serape, the man from whose hidden face the cunning disguise had been stripped, was the marshal of Kicking Mule! Savage defiance mingled with despair in the bearded, haggard face, that was now revealed to all eyes. For some seconds, there was silence; and then there was a roar from a hundred throats.

"Starbuck! The pizen skunk! String him up!"

"Lynch him!"

The crowd closed in, furiously, relentlessly. The discovery that the red-handed miscreant who had terrorised them for years, was the town marshal of Kicking Mule, gave the finishing touch to the frenzy of the excited crowd.



"Lynch him!" came the roar from almost every throat in Kicking Mule.

Wolfish eyes were fixed on the ruffian who had so long terrorised the cow country. There were guns in many hands now, as if the cowmen were too impatient to wait for the rope. But Colonel Sanderson waved back the surging, infuriated crowd.

"Hold in your hosses, fellers," said the Kid coolly. "I guess you want to know who this guy is! You'll sure be some surprised when you see his face, I reckon."

"I guess I can see his face plain enough," growled Carter, of the Joshua-A. "It's Black George."

"You've said it!" grinned the Kid. "But he's sure somebody else, too—somebody that you guys know. That black skin comes off'n his face—"

"What?"

"This hyer burg never got Black George, because you allowed that he was a coon!" said the Kid. "And I guess I was sure fooled like the rest, till I roped him in and saw him close. But I'll tell the world that he ain't no coon, any more'n I am; there's a white man's face under that black skin."

The cunning mask that seemed moulded to the features of the road-agent was roughly dragged away. Then, as the white man's face was revealed, there was a gasp of stupefaction from the Kicking Mule crowd.

"Seth Starbuck!"

"The marshal!"

The roar of astonishment was followed by a breathless silence. The man

"Lynch him!"

The road-agent was surrounded, by fierce eyes, threatening faces, clutching hands. Bowie knives slashed through the rope that tied him to the horse; many hands grasped him and tore him from the broncho's back; in the midst of a whirling, raging crowd, he was dragged to the tall cottonwood that grew opposite the Golden Mule Hotel. Colonel Sanderson looked on with a grim face. The Kid slipped from his saddle. Mesquite Bill plunged into the crowd with a riata in his hand. The Kid walked quietly into the Golden Mule. He had handed over the road-agent, the merciless robber and slayer of the trails, to the justice that had so long waited for him; but he did not care to take part in the last scene.

Justice, swift and sure, was meted out to Black George. The vengeance of the cow-town that he had so long deluded and betrayed, fell fiercely on the marshal of Kicking Mule. The roar of six-guns awoke every echo of the town, riddling with bullets the body of the desperado that swung from a branch of the cottonwood.

Black George had ridden his last trail; Kicking Mule had lost its marshal!

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's Western thriller, entitled: "THE RIO KID'S NEW PAL!")

LAST WEEK—Post Your Efforts NOW!

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How To Send In Your Entries.

We have now come to the fourth and final week of this contest: so you must complete your entries and send them in without delay.

We give you here the Fourth Set of puzzles to solve. As before, each of the pictures represents a boy's Christian name. They are quite easy, but to make the contest absolutely fair and equal for every boy, we have already given the Full List of names containing every solution required in the entire contest in the "Popular" dated January 25th.

As you find the solutions, write them IN INK in the spaces provided underneath, sign your name and address on the coupon attached to this set, and cut out the whole tablet.

Now gather together the three previous sets, and pin all four together in order, so as to form one complete entry. Place the entry in a properly stamped envelope and post it to:

The POPULAR "Who's Who,"
5, Carmelite Street,
London, E.C.4 (Comp.),

so as to arrive there not later than THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20th, 1930. Efforts arriving after that date will be disqualified.

RULES (which must be strictly adhered to.)

THE "Rex-Acme" Motor-Cycle will be awarded to the reader whose solution of the four sets of "Who's Who" puzzles are correct or most nearly correct, the 50 Model Aeroplanes following in order of merit.

In the event of ties, the Editor reserves the right to divide the value of the prizes as he thinks best, but no competitor may receive more than one prize. The Editor's decision will be final and binding. You may send in as many attempts as you like, but only complete attempts made out IN INK on the "Who's Who" Picture-Sets Nos. 1 to 4 inclusive, will be considered.

Only one name may be written under each picture. Entries mutilated or bearing alterations or alternative solutions will be disqualified. No correspondence will be allowed. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery, and no responsibility can be taken for entries lost, or mislaid, or delayed in the post or otherwise.

Employees of the proprietors of The POPULAR and of "Modern Boy" in which the contest is also running, must not compete.

THE POPULAR.—No. 577.

"WHO'S WHO"		SET 4	
		25	26
		27	28
		29	30
		31	32
I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.			
Signed			
Address			
..... 'Popular.'			