

are plotting to gain possession of Circle L ranch and the property of Mona Hall, a neighbor and life-long friend of Slim Loyale. Slim discovers that Sheriff Starbuck has joined the plot

against him. With the help of Da-kota Blue and his cowboys, Slim Loyale defies the landgrabbers to do their worst.

"I say yes," exploded Tisdale. "I got money in my poke an' the boys down in Jericho Valley have authorized me to act for the whole crowd. Let's go and see the young lady right away."

That night, behind locked door and shuttered windows, three men met in heated argument in George Arthur's office. Arthur himself was again nervously pac-ing back and forth, while Sarg Brockwell and Jigger Starbuck oc-cupied chairs

cupied chairs. "I tell you," snapped Arthur, "we've got to act quick, without a minute of delay. If we don't, we lose everything. Those herds are nearly to the north end of Jeri- Arthur. "We can still win out-

Phone 254

Elkin, N. C.

dollar a head to cross the range, but they'll pay in the end. They'll have to, and they know it. "But now Loyale is going to loan Miss Hall money' enough to pay me. We've got to stop that move somehow, and there is only one way to do it. I've told you how. We'd be better off if we had the Circle L too, but we simply gotta get the Dot H Dot to get any money outa this deal." "It's a pretty stiff deal yo're handin' me an' my gang, Arthur," growled Brockwell, his big teeth showing in a snarl of anger. "Rob-

showing in a snarl of anger. "Robbin' a bank is apt to start some-thin' we cain't stop. Folks in this neck of the woods are beginning to get kinda on edge." "Why shouldn't they?" broke in

Starbuck. "Yuh've messed things up from the first, Sarg. Yuh won't Starbuck. Yun yo and yo

Arthur remained and drank and drank until he was dead-drunk. At least, the other two were fighting men, who, in the final showdown ware some the solution of finish it." **Plumbing and Heating**

happy that we'll shoot with you."

big. Brockwell, that bank has got to be robbed, and Loyale and Blue have got to be rubbed out. Fur-thermore, we've got to act to-"Oh, I know you will, Mr. Tis-dale," she cried, "You don't know what this means! You can't

THE ELKIN TRIBUNE, ELKIN, NORTH CAROLINA

ailbird!"

Brockwell licked his thick lips. "Keno! I'll split my crew. Jigger yuh can take half; I'll take the rest. While yore outa town, I'll spear that bank. It'll be a good alibi for yuh anyhow. "But we don't take all the Arthur, at alloi for yuh anyhow. "But we don't take all the risk. Arthur, at daybreak tomorrow mornin' yo're due at the Dot H Dot. Clamp that foreclosure on, an' make it stick. I don't care how much time of notice yuh've give that Hall woman. Take it back. Slap that foreclosure on without another day of grace. Savvy?'' "Oh, I'll do it," promised Ar-

he don't," promised Abe. At the Circle L, a heavy argu-Owens and Charley Quinn were ment was in progress. Steve

sprawled flat on the ground be-hind a substantial pile of spare corral rails, their cheeks pressed to the stocks of a pair of Winchesters, the muzzles of cattleman. Without further words, chesters, the muzzles of which Starbuck and Brockwell went out of steadily upon a dark clump of riders.

yuh," came back Jigger Starbuck's voice. "This is the law. Put down where fighting men, who, in the final showdown, were game to sniff smoke. But he was the rat, drinking to stifle his innate cow-ardice, to try and whip his shak-ing nerves to face the big show-"Yore kind of law has got starbuck" retorted Steve "B

busted back around this ranch, Starbuck," retorted Steve. "Best thing yuh can do is pull yore Out at the Dot H Dot, Mona Hall was radiant. Sam Tisdale had just laid a pile of bills on the ta-served around here."

There came a mutter of argu-ment from the posse, then Leo Just laid a pile of bills on the ta-ble before her. "There's five thou-sand dollars, Miss Hall," he said. "There came a mutter of argu-ment from the posse, then Leo Brockwell's venomous tones sounded. "Aw, hell! This blah makes a good count as the herds go through the pass at the north end of Jericho. Yuh can rest beaver that we'll shar an' circle that pile of rails an' show them ias-Let's spread out an' circle that pile of rails an' show them jaspers they're draggin' a short

upon him, stalked strain wards that place, shootin ily. His hat left his he stalked straight toand led to one side, tor. Invisible fingers

beard Tisdale curse in sudden pain, but he kept on, shooting low and center. The hostile guns went quiet and

The hostile guns went quiet and a choking curse echoed. A man tottered out of the blackness to-wards him. "Reach high," snap-ped Slim, "Reach high, quick!" "Loyale!" gasped the other. "Yuh had all the luck. Yuh got me—yuh got me, yuh damned jailbird!"

The voice broke off and the fig-

ure slumped forward silently. Slim knew by the voice, that he had killed Leo Brockwell.

As Dakota Blue cut in from the opposite side, he found himself barging right through the scat-tered and disorganized forces of Starbuck's dishonored law. Star-

from any other of their crowd, Dakota wisely held his fire, working always towards his objective. He knew that he was taking a long chance of intercepting a slug from the gun of some ranch de-fonder, but he was willing to the fender, but he was willing to take Win- the gamble, providing he could get which at Starbuck.

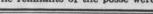
Long since, the last atom of doubt had been wiped from Dakota's mind regarding just how and where Jigger Starbuck stood in relation to the decent interests of the country. Too much damn-ing evidence had been uncovered

in the past week or two for him to be mistaken. The remnants of the posse wer

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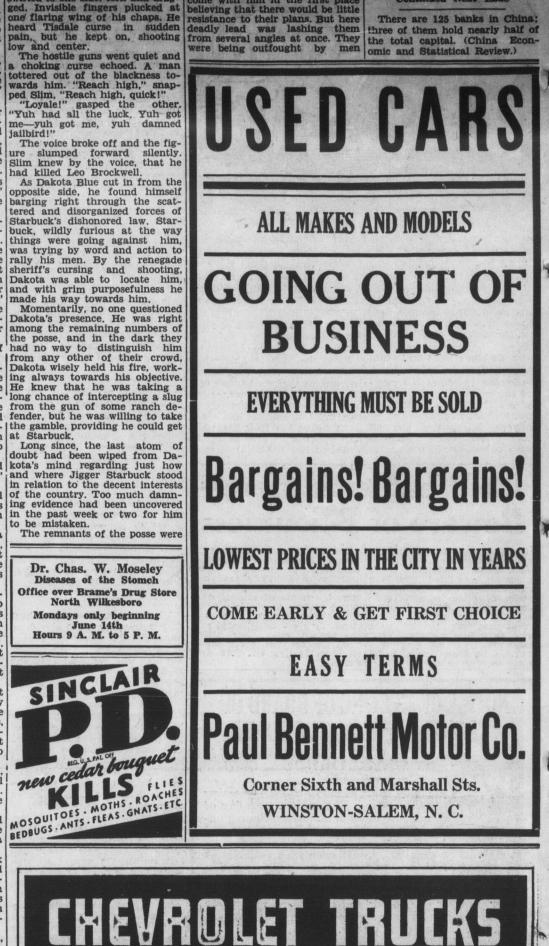


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they could hardly locate, who held the advantage of cealment and protection. to break and give back

There are 125 banks in three of them hold nearly the total capital. (China omic and Statistical Revie half of





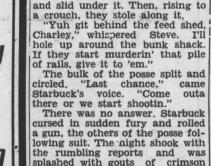
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lowing suit. The night shook with the rumbling reports and was splashed with gouts of crimson flame from searching gun muz-

zles. Without any more hesitation, Steve and Charley went to work. They laced the night with lead, their rifles sounding flatly. The posse was torn with confusion. "Spread out!" yelled Starbuck. "Git around the whole damned place as' grab cover

place, an' grab cover. The posse needed no second mmand. Like startled quail they all scattered, seizing upon any-

square During the renewed argument over this plan, Steve and Charley got busy immediately. Not unlike a pair of awkward land crabs, they spraddled backwards, located the corral fence with their feet and slid under it. Then, rising to

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Phone 83

prising crossfire. One individual of the crowd, who had had his horse shot from under him, had the bad judgment to duck behind a corner of the big ranch house. Here he halted beneath an open window, peering back into the darkness.

Oscar, the big Swede cook, startled by this outburst of sud-den gunfire. stuck his head out of the window. The posseman did not see him, but Oscar saw the crouching figure. By the snarling curses echoing unward he knew trouching ngure. By the sharing curses echoing upward, he knew it was neither Steve or Charley. Therefore Oscar leaned well out, one huge fist clubbed. It fell like a post maul, and the posseman subsided in a silent heap. Oscar chuckled and heaved his big bulk out of the window He

Oscar chuckled and heaved his big bulk out of the window. He found the fellow's guns and heft-ed them. "I guess this bane good time to start fightin'," rumbled Oscar to himself. So with a queer Swedish war cry, he waded in. Slim and his two companions were about a quarter of a mile from home when that first burst of gunfire echoed. Instantly Slim spurred his mount to a scudding

run. run. "Our fight, Tisdale," he flung over his shoulder. "No call for yuh to take chances. Yuh can drop out." "Like hell I will!" snapped Tisdale, spurring up even with Slim and Dakota Blue. "Yuh shot square with me I'm returnin" shot square with me. I'm returnin' the favor."

Just as they reached the ranch they heard Oscar's war cry and saw, by the gun flames that an-swered it, the approximate posi-tion of the attackers. Slim left his addle while here are still saddle while his horse was still in movement, and ran, crouching, down one corner of the central orral. Tisdale followed Slim, but Da-

kota cut around the other way. By the steady spanging of the Winchesters, Slim got Steve and Charley located, So he turned his own guns loose on the hostile po-

Almost opposite him from the other side of the corral came an-swering lead. Slim, a wild ferocity Phone 255

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