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ear is bleeding. That was rather a
neat shot, don't you think?"

"It was," admitted Dean, without
enthusiasm.

"When you shot my shoulder, you
had a bigger mark."

"My ears are noted for their size,"
growled Dean.

"Better tie it up in this," com-
mented Stranleigh, rolling up into a
ball, and flinging towards Jim a hand-
kerchief. The wounded man tied it
around his bleeding ear.

"Now," said Stranleigh, coolly, "get
your parley over as soon as possible,
then go to Miss Armstrong, who will
attend to your wound. But in order
to win the privilege of surgical treat-
ment, you must recognize that you
are a prisoner."

"A prisoner!" echoed Dean.

"YES; a prisoner," repeated Stran-
leigh. "You must give me your
word that you will say nothing to Miss
Armstrong to show that I had a hand
in this. Make what excuse you like
for the disaster, and then get back to
the bunk house, and tell your men the
conditions of the game so far as we
have gone. I will allow you five min-
utes after your return to show those
chaps the letter 'S' I have perforated
in the door. They are an unbelieving
lot, and I wish to gain their respect.
Without hurting anybody, I mean to
prove I am a dead shot. I'm well pro-
visioned here, and prepared to stand
a siege. Until Mr. Armstrong re-
turns not one of you will be allowed
outside the chalet. Don't be misled
by the fact that you outnumber me
six to one. I hold a magazine rifle,
possess an ample supply of ammuni-
tion, and have just given evidence of
the rapidity with which I can reload."

"Yes," said Dean, "your position
would be bull-strong and hog-tight, if
you had a chum with you who could
shoot too. As it is, you've nobody to
relieve you, and a man must sleep.
It will only take one of us to defeat
you. We've no magazine rifles, and
don't need any. I'll undertake the job
myself."

"How do you propose to do it?"

"That would be telling," said Jim,
craftily.

"Why not?" answered Stranleigh.
"I'm placing my cards on the table.
There were two things I determined
to accomplish when I broke jail. I
hope that wounded ear hasn't im-
paired your hearing, so that you may
listen with attention. It's always as
well to know what your enemy de-
sires."

"Well, I hear you," said Jim, sul-
lenly.

"The first thing was to shoot you,
choosing some spot that was not vital.
This in return for your shooting me.
That part of my programme I have
accomplished."

"What's the other part?"

"The second is to keep you all pris-
oners as long as you kept me. Now
tell me what you intend to do."

"I won't do that."

"You're over-cautious, Dean. I'm
not so chary, and so will give you the
information. There are only two por-
tions of the night during which you
can come out unnoticed: before the
moon rises, and after it sets. You will
take up a position where you can see
the barricade when day begins to
dawn. You'll be wise to choose a spot
a long way off, because the explosion,
when it comes, will wreck everything
in the neighborhood."

"What explosion?"

"The dynamite explosion. This wall
is built of rock, intersticed with dynamite
cartridges. You will likely ob-
literate the ranch house."

"I'll obliterate you, anyway."

"Quite so, but at a tremendous cost,
because whatever the fate of Mr. Ar-
mstrong's residence, the doom of the
bunk house is certain. You may be
outside that danger, but you won't
be free of another. You suppose,
doubtless, that I shall be asleep in the
cavern. As a matter of fact, I shall
be sleeping placidly under the stars,
quite out of reach of the main dis-



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