



BY HARRY SINCLAIR BAGG AND JOSEPH WHEEL

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CHAPTER I.

BORN... BUY A RANCH.

The searching rays of the noonday sun beat down upon the Nevada desert.

Across the waste two tiny specks moved. Save for them all life seemed dead. Both horses and men were gray with dust. The men's throats were brick dry; and yet the taller of the two hummed a song. Ah-had of them green trees beckoned.

Abruptly they began climbing the broken lands. The country of the Little Washoe burst upon them. Paradise Valley spread out in a gigantic horseshoe. A range, the Santa Rosas, banked three sides of it, the never-falling willows marking where Rebel Creek came tumbling out of the hills at the apex of the horseshoe.

Tired and thirsty as he was, the tall man stopped for a brief second to appreciate that wonderful valley. "Ain't that a sweet country?" he murmured to the short-faced man, hard of face and eyes, who rode beside him.

"Shorty's answer was abrupt. He was in a state of drowsiness when he reached Rock.

The man was good in the parties. He counted twice. For two nights he had watched the twinkling lights which marked the trail of Potosi. The lone was followed, and on the third evening they followed the trail to Rock.

Rock was a small town, with

two saloons.

"You're a good boy, like the Senor Bodine," she cried.

"Oh, damn Bodine," Acklin snarled.

"I always thought he was no good of a brother," a voice answered in a mellow western drawl.

"He's a swell," said Bodine. Bodine was a swell.

"I'm a swell," said Acklin. Bodine was a swell.

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