

when Walt and Tony Lascelles agreed to take their holiday together that they might shoot red deer in Otago Central, Peyton offered to go with them.

"C'n yer shoot?" demanded Walt then, with his teeth on an oiled rag. He was trying to sluice some of the rust off his old .303 with the broken leaf.

Peyton was really angry.

"Haven't I told you that I shot eighteen men—"

"But there's jest two on us." Walt shook his head gravely. "Not 'nuff meat fur yer ter feed on. Reckon Tony 'n me c'n do wi'out all that killin', too."

Then it was that Peyton sloughed his superiority, and gained grudging permission to help stalk some of the roughest deer country outside Scotland. Tony cherished his disgust, and gave the word in the whares that he would knock the eternal stuffing out of Peyton before he brought him back.

"Makes me sick," he said. "Always gassing about his Lyman sights, an' his range-finders, an' his drifts. I'll plunk a hole into him with my old girl one of these days, an' not whip the cat over it either."

But Peyton's mouth was filled with other words this morning in sight of the Chimney.

"Wind's blowin' up to him, isn't it? From the off, isn't it? If I go straight ahead I'll land him, won't I? Not? Which way'd I better go, then? Nearly a mile off, isn't he?"

To the lay eye it might have been a mile as the crow flies. The two who had been that way before knew that it was a five-mile stalk over unkindly country, and that Peyton was not in condition to face it. But it was impossible to say so.

Walt jerked a thumb in the direction of a dimpled hollow at the bluff-foot. A half-score hinds and nobbers were moving in it.

"You look out they don't give the alarm. Come up out'n the bush

careful. Great Scott, man; don't go off wi'out any tucker."

Peyton swept cold meat and damper into his pocket, scudded away through the burnt timber that began the bush, and dived out of sight like a scared rabbit.

"Fat lot o' heads he'll git"; Walt was fiddling with the fire. "He'll git blown in ten minits—'n then he'll git lost—'n then we'll hev ter take half the night nosin' him out. What'd we let him come fur, I wonner?"

"So's we could teach him—things," said Tony in direct-sent wisdom. "He's got to learn that he isn't blooming lord of everybody, and I'm going to teach him."

"How?" asked Walt, sceptically.

"Lots of ways. First of all—he'll never get that head. It's a sixteen-pointer, too, only he forgot the two little bottom ones that you can't see from a distance. You know it's a sixteen, Walt?"

"'Course. 'N the on'y one we're like ter see, by the look o' the last few days. Season's well enough advanced, too. Well?"

"Well, said Tony, eating damper rapidly. "He'll never sight it again. I'm going up to get the beggar myself. Peyton'll never know. An' I'll come back down that gully away to south'ard."

"Don't yer be a fool." Walt was cramming cartridges into the breast of his shirt, but he let a handful drop at his word. "Peyton'll be rakin' the landskip up ter two thousand. I know his breed. 'N he might hit yer 'cause he won't be aimin' at yer. Jest don't yer be so ratty, Tony."

"All serene." Tony collected necessaries, and loped off downwind, flinging back a caution. "Don't you give me away, Walt. And mind you rag Peyton when he doesn't bring in a head."

The tasselled snowgrass dripped with dew, and where the sun dripped up the fresh, sharp breath of the earth Tony ran light as a hare,