

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### WHEN THE SPRING CAME.

FROST was gone and the snow had melted away. Jack was on his farm with his two chums working at the plough, laying up the softened soil in ridges. It was hard work, and two of the toilers were complete novices at it. Jim Brown had spared Jerry for a few days to assist Jack in teaching them, and no severe critics were about to point out uneven furrows, here and there. Moreover, only half the land was to be tilled that year. The rest was to be used as grazing ground for a few cattle the settlers had contributed to give Jack a start in life.

The gift was, in part, a recognition of his worth as a promising young settler, and in part as a reward for his plucky assistance in dealing with the horse-stealing gang.

It was a thing of the past, for Jake Blunt had been tried and hanged at Regina for crimes he had committed before he appeared in the final scene of his nefarious proceedings.

Jake Blunt died as he lived, a hard unrepentant man. No word of regret for his misdeeds passed his lips, and the only thing he regretted was his mistake in going to such an unprofitable place as the forest in the character of a lumberer.

"It was sneaking and playing the game low down," he said, "but it was de Gama's idea and I fell in with it. He was a man who allus preferred doing a thing by cunning, instead of bein' open and manly. He wasn't zackly a coward, but he shirked fightin' when he could, bein' so precious careful of his skin."