

"No, sir; to put out the signal so that your train would be piled on top of ours. Then Haraldson tried to stop him, and the wrecker swung a burning log to beat out the youngster's brains."

"While you lay still!"

"Not much! I'd pulled myself together by that time, staggered to my feet, climbed the bank, and rushed with a yell at that wrecker. He ran for all he was worth."

"What happened next?"

"Why, the next thing I knew your train hands were throwing water over me."

"I was there," said the President. "We found you lying on Haraldson's body, and a hard time we had to pull away the burning wreckage before it was too late."

"You understand, Mr. Gault, that this youngster——"

"Gave his body to the flames."

"He threw away his life to save your life, sir."

Brand opened his eyes. "And that's a lie," he muttered. "I signalled to save the train hands. Old Gault can go to hell!"

The President leaned forward, grasping the boy's rough hand in both his own.

"Rest, my dear lad," he whispered. "We'll soon have a doctor for you. Sleep, my dear lad, sleep."

Brand lay back exhausted, and presently, as though in a dream heard a deep voice speaking: "Hilda, do you hear, child? It's only heroes who tell all the truth."

Then in the dream Brand felt something fluttering near him, heard a little sob, and saw a young girl bending over him, her face full of pity, her eyes glittering with tears. But his brain measured the pulse of the rolling train, the jolts at the rail-lengths, the metre of the grade running onward and onward into silence.