
THE HOMESTEADERS

for him, I'm afraid. We might try some mustard and hot water, Mrs. Arthurs."

"Take your time, Lil," whispered Arthurs. "You may save your country a long board bill." But Lilian Arthurs' abhorrence of Gardiner's perfidy had been overwhelmed in a wave of sympathy for a suffering fellow-being. She hurried to the kitchen, while the men of the party filed down the stairs and out into the yard. John Harris was the last to leave the house, and he walked slowly, with bare, bowed head, into the group who were excitedly discussing the amazing turn events had taken. He took no part in their conversation, but stood a little apart, plunged deep in his own inward struggle.

At last he turned and called his wife in the kitchen door. "Bring Beulah," he said.

The two women joined him. At first Harris stood with face averted, but in a moment he spoke in a clear, quiet voice.

"I haven't played the game fair with you two," he said, "and I want to say so now. Perhaps it would be truer to say that I played the wrong game. Twenty-five years have proved it was the wrong game. Now, without a penny, I can start just where I started twenty-five years ago. The only difference is that I am an old man instead of a young one. I'm going to take another homestead and start again, at the right game, if Mary will start with me."