

"Maybe the pleasure would be mutual," replied Layton, dryly. "Though I never have killed a man!"

"Who sent you here?"

"Tess. She thought me a traitor, but she asked me to help you. I think I would have done so without her asking, however."

Dan looked at him in some uncertainty.

"Tess!" he asked. Then he grinned. "She's my wife—"

"Never mind that. I know about it. I'm here to help you if I can, and if I can clear you—then what?"

The gray eyes were full on Dan, and the prisoner shrugged his shoulders uneasily.

"Me and my *klootchman* will go back to our hills an'—an' raise a family, I reckon."

The blood swept into Layton's cheeks and then slowly receded, leaving a gray pallor there.

"And you will be good to her? Answer that—will you be good to her?"

His voice had trembled with the first sentence, but it rolled out full and strong and tense at the close. Dan looked at him sullenly.