

there sat behind me one of the men I had always known as the keenest lover of his gun; yet with his head resting on his bent-up knees, he was looking vacantly into space. His gun, which he had brought along from habit, was lying unloaded on the rocks beside him. It was "settling-day" with his merchant, and he had done badly that summer.

"What, not shooting, Jim?" I asked. "Surely, you aren't going to let them all off, are you?"

"What's the good?" he replied. "I've got to starve anyhow."

"What's the matter now?" I said.

"The matter is, I've got nothing for the winter, and what few ducks I can kill won't keep my kids alive."

"What's the balance against you?" I asked.

"Something over three thousand dollars," he answered.

"Three thousand *what!*" I exclaimed.

"Dollars," he jerked out, mechanically.

I thought to myself there must be some mistake; but I found out afterwards that there was no mistake at all, for when the great crash took place, and so many merchant firms went bankrupt, the debts to the firm at this one place were