

'You're putting it too strongly,' said Gabriel, deprecatingly. 'In the first place, my investments with Gunn's firm are by no means failures, and they only hold as security a mortgage on the forest land below the hill. It's scarcely worth the money. I would have sold it long ago, but it had been a fancy of father's to keep it wild land for the sake of old times and the healthiness of the town.'

'There used to be a log cabin there, where the old man had a habit of camping out whenever he felt cramped by civilisation up here, wasn't there?' said Uncle Sylvester, meditatively.

'Yes,' said Gabriel, impatiently; 'it's still there—but to return to Mr. Gunn. He has taken a fancy to Kitty, and even if *I* could not lift the mortgage, there's some possibility that the land would still remain in the family.'

'I think I'll drive over this afternoon and take a look at the old shanty if this infernal weather lets up.'

'Yes; but just now, my dear Sylvester, let us attend to business. I want to show you those investments.'

'Oh, certainly; trot 'em out,' said his brother, plucking up a simulation of interest as he took a seat at the table.

From a drawer of his desk Gabriel brought