
THE HOMESTEADERS

Gardiner smiled a faint smile. "Well, what are you going to do about it?" he said.

"We are going to put you in Travers' place and tender him our apologies," said the coroner.

"Very good," said Gardiner. "And do I marry the girl?"

"This is no time for levity," said the coroner, sternly. "You have escaped a murder charge only by grace of this young man's excellent constitution."

But Travers had crowded into the centre of the circle. "Gardiner," he said, "if you weren't under arrest I'd thrash you here and now. But you can at least do something to square yourself. Where is that money?"

"That's right, Jim. Everyone thinks of what is nearest his heart."

"You scoundrel! You know why it is near my heart. You have robbed Mr. Harris of all that he had spent his whole life for. You will have no chance to use that money yourself. You are sure of your living for the next twenty years. Why not show that you are not all bad—that you have some human sentiments in you? It seems as little as you can do."

"There may be something in what you say," said Gardiner. "I have a slip of paper here with the key to the secret."

He reached with his finger and thumb in his vest pocket and drew out a small folded paper.