

said the Kid, biting the end of a pencil. "We all right, so far—and the men, Jackson? No trouble with them, I suppose?"

"No, sir, not to speak of," said the ex-Knifer a little reluctantly.

"What is it? Out with it, Jackson!"

The Kid was master here and now—a thing his father had never been anywhere, chief of a clan though he might be.

"Well, sir, to tell you the truth," said Forester Jackson, "there's a man, name of Scully, as tough from 'way back—and he has a bad influence on the men."

"Why, fire him!" the Kid's eyes sparkled. "Why can't you fire him, Jackson? Do you think Mr. Hearne pays us to run the 'Patricia' as a free-lunch bar for 'toughs'?"

"Well," said the ex-professor of "St. Jacob's," "I'm against all violence——!"

"You?"

"Yes, sir," said the Knifer, a little sadly. "I can't see, if I was to begin, I don't know where it might end. And Mr. Molesay, sir, he made me promise—before I left——"

"Very well, then," said the Kid, with decision. "Then I must do it myself!"

He went out. There was a noise of what might mildly be called a small discussion. The Knifer moved to the window of the wooden shanty. He set his nails into his palms to stop himself from going out to take a hand.

"Oh, the young 'un!" he said—"such a young 'un!"

Then the Kid—McGhie's Kid, that was—came back again, breathing hard.

"Chucked!" he said. "You'll have no more trouble, Jackson. I gave him his wages and walk-out ticket, and saw him start across the divide for Fort Mile City! I'm like you, Jackson—against all violence!"