

listening, while Sally talked to the cat in a quiet undertone that disturbed nobody. Skelton was listening too, his rough-hewn face keen with the born farmer's slow-moving intelligence, nodding gravely as several knotty points were set forth.

When Kingsway paused, he reached a great brown hand across the table and grasped his.

"I belong to the old times," said Skelton huckily, "and I'm like a lot of old-timers that have had their day and missed their way. I'm down and out, sir. Down and out—and it's not much matter, for I'm getting an old chap, and there's no one left to go down with me. But—the lads that are trying against big odds to-day—the poor beggars that are starving on homesteads—they'll bless you, sir, later on, when they've made good along of the help this scheme of yours will give 'em."

"A man's never down and out while he's above ground, if then," said Kingsway, who knew what he meant himself if nobody else did. "I'd like to have a business talk with you, Mr. Skelton, another day. We can't run this thing without some shrewd men who understand conditions here, and have lived here and tussled with it, and know it year in and year out."

"You bet, Skelton knows all about it!" cried Robin, his thin face glowing with pleasure. "I'd like to see any man that knows the country better than he does!"

Mr. Fayce inquired tenderly when shares would be obtainable, as he knew a fellow who was looking out for a good safe investment.

Alberta was heard to sigh.

"If only *I* could have done something like that,"