

## CHAPTER II

### ELEVEN YEARS PASS

ELEVEN years had passed since Denzil's fall, and in that time much history had been made. Carnac Grier, true to his nature, had travelled from incident to incident, from capacity to capacity, apparently without system, yet actually with the keenest desire to fulfil himself; with an honesty as inveterate as his looks were good and his character filled with dark recesses. In vain had his father endeavoured to induce him to enter the lumber business; to him it seemed too conventional and fixed.

Yet, in his way, he knew the business well. By instinct, over the twenty-five years of his life, he had observed and become familiar with the main features of the work. He had once or twice even buried himself in the shanties of the backwoods, there to inhale and repulse the fetid air, to endure the untoward, half-savage life, the clean, strong food, the bitter animosities and the savage friendships. It was a land where sunshine travelled, and in the sun the bright, tuneful birds made lively the responsive world. Sometimes an eagle swooped down the stream; again and again, hawks, and flocks of pigeons which frequented the lonely groves on the river-side, made vocal the world of air; flocks of wild ducks, or geese, went whirring down the long spaces of water between the trees on either bank; and some one with a fiddle or a concertina made musical the evening, while the singing voices of rough habitants rang through the air.