

still staring stupidly at the receiver, when the other man touched him on the arm, saying kindly :

"It is all right, shaver, they haven't started the smoking-out yet, and now they won't have much chance, not to-night at any rate. What was it that you heard, and where did you hear it ? "

Still gripping the back of the chair, for the room seemed to have a shockingly bad habit of swinging round and round, Elgar told the story of his carrying a message from Reuben Shore to the cook at Josh Browning's lumber camp, about the smoking-out of a skunk, he described how he had asked to be allowed to join in the fun, and the laughing of the cook, which had offended him so desperately. Then he told how he had come to Eli Smart's store on a business errand, and heard two men talking, the one telling the other of what was to be done to-night, and how it was their laughing about his own request to join in the fun which had revealed to him what was really to the fore.

The man to whom he told his story made rapid notes in a well-thumbed notebook, and then proceeded to put sharp questions to Elgar.

"Who were the two men in the store ? Would you be able to identify them again ? "

"I didn't see their faces, but I should know their voices I think," he answered, feeling mad with himself because he had not managed to somehow get a view of the two men who talked, although it would have been a difficult feat, as he was so wedged in, and they were so much taller than himself.

"Humph, that is a poor sort of clue, because you see a person can alter his voice so much, and there is scarcely any chance of that sort of identification,