

THE MONEY MASTER

CHAPTER I

THE GRAND TOUR OF JEAN JACQUES BARBILLE

"PEACE and plenty, peace and plenty"—that was the phrase M. Jean Jacques Barbille, miller and money-master, applied to his home-scene, when he was at the height of his career. Both winter and summer the place had a look of content and comfort, even a kind of opulence. There is nothing like a grove of pines to give a sense of warmth in winter and an air of coolness in summer, so does the slightest breeze make the pine-needles swish like the freshening sea. But to this scene, where pines made a friendly back-ground, there were added oak, ash, and hickory trees, though in less quantity on the side of the river where were Jean Jacques Barbille's house and mills. They flourished chiefly on the opposite side of the Beau Cheval, whose waters flowed so waywardly—now with a rush, now silently away through long reaches of country. Here the land was rugged and bold, while farther on it became gentle and spacious, and was flecked or striped with farms