

GABRIEL PRAED'S CASTLE

conscious of the underlying nervousness. The carelessness of Frye's answer was genuine.

"No. Boutillier only got his acceptance yesterday, so they won't come to the Fs for a day or so. But it's best not to worry about it. If one is hung with a number, it's fate; if one is kicked out, it's equally so. In either case, we live through it."

"Yes, it's wonderful the lot of killing we do take. Cats are nothing to it," Thorpe scoffed bitterly. Then, with a determined effort to drop the too-important subject, "What a swell you were yesterday, Garvie, when I saw you driving with that black-haired, gorgeously attired girl. It was only the western backwoods air of the old gentleman that gave me courage to raise my hat. Who are they?"

Garvie laughed. "Yes, the girl would be splendid but for that same gorgeousness of attire. Perhaps her tastes may tone down. They are western, all right, but the Canadian forests have the credit of her superb vitality and his broad shoulders. The father is Gabriel Praed, a mining Cræsus from British Columbia; and the joke is that he has regularly adopted me."

"To him that hath shall be given," quoted Thorpe. "But why the honour?"

"It seems he went, when a mere lad, from the Ontario backwoods to one of my father's lumber-camps in Michigan. He got on well, married a French girl, who died young, leaving Mademoi-