

the wintry air was still with a great silence, broken only by the swirl of the river and the Colonel's maundering voice.

"Ten years ago, a certain Railroad King was crossing the Rocky Mountains in his private car—now, I guess you ain't honouring me with your attention, but you shall presently, by thunder!—and the name of that aforesaid plutocrat was Michael Gault."

"What's that?" said Brand, turning sharply.

The Colonel chuckled. "Now, if that particular capitalist had been allowed his own way, he wouldn't have permitted a pilot train to be hauled out of bed to see his track clear, in which event the recording angel might have been called upon to 'write off' one plutocrat. It was the division superintendent who despatched the pilot engine, with a caboose for ballast, and orders to look out for the usual natural amenities of mountain travel, such as rock-slides, wash-outs, and bush-fires. There was a little unexpected hitch, the pilot went to kingdom come, and the plutocrat would have followed, but that a young fool of a fireman set the wreckage alight by way of a signal. Now the young fool aforesaid, who nearly burned himself to death to save Dives, was one Brand Ha——"

"That's enough," said Haraldson; "it's no business of yours."

"Young man, it's so much my business that I have just been to the Rocky Mountains to make enquiries."

"And that's why you thrust yourself into my company?"

"You air correct."

"What do you want to know?"

"Young man, that enterprising ego-maniac, who tried to murder Michael Gault, is now one of the leading men of New York City."

"Well?"