

CHAPTER XXV.

MOKE'S RESTORATION.

ALL that could be done with the lifeless body of Silva de Gama was to convey it to an unfrequented spot near the wood, bury it beneath the snow, and take such steps as would secure it from the attack of prowling wolves. Limbs were cut off the trees and piled above it with a careful arrangement that promised to defy the efforts of wild creatures to remove or disorder them. When that was done, the men who had done the work, went back, silently communing with themselves.

No harsh comment on the dead man, or his departed associates, was spoken that day. He had paid the penalty of his criminal living with his life, and all the rigour of the law could have obtained no more from him.

But Jake Blunt was still free. That was a sore point with them, and with the other settlers who were enlightened on the subject. The police, when they arrived at Kellson's to take the prisoners away, were bitterly disappointed. Naturally they regarded matters in a professional light.

"While Blunt is at liberty," they said, "we shall never be free of a gang of scoundrels. He's a sort of magnet to wasters and thieves of every description. They are drawn to him like so many needles. Shoot him on sight, for goodness' sake, the next time you come across him."

"But surely he will get fixed up now and die in the wood," said Jim Brown.

The police were doubtful, one of them remarking that Blunt was a strong man, who could endure more than any