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ever, can pull up, because by this time you have no doubt found out a good deal, if you're not all a fool. Curiosity's at the bottom of half our youthful follies, isn't it, Courthorne? We want to know what the things forbidden actually taste like."

"Well," said Witham dryly, "I don't quite know. You see, I had very little money in the old country, and still less leisure here to spend either on that kind of experimenting. Where to get enough to eat was the one problem that worried me."

Dane turned a trifle sharply. "We

Dane turned a trifle sharply. "We are, I fancy, tolerably good friends. Isn't it a little unnecessary for you to adopt that tone with me?"

Witham laughed, but made no answer, and their companion, said nothing at

Witham laughed, but made no answer, and their companion said nothing at all. Either the night wind had a drowsy effect on him or he was moodily resentful, for it was not until Witham pulled up before the homestead whose lands he farmed indifferently under Barrington's supervision that he opened his mouth

"You have got off very cheaply to-night, and if you're wise you'll let that kind of thing alone in future," said Wit-

The lad stepped down from the waggon and then stood still. "I resent advice from you as much as I do your uncalled-for insolence an hour or two ago," he said. "To lie low until honest men got used to him would be considerably more becoming to a man like you."

"Well" said With

"Well," said Witham, stung into forgetfulness, "I'm not going to offend in that fashion again, and you can go to the devil in the way that most pleases you. In fact, I only pulled you out of the pit to-night because a lady, who apparently takes a quite unwarranted interest in you, asked me to."

Ferris stared up at him, and his face showed almost livid through the luminous night.

"She asked you to!" he said. "By the Lord, I'll make you sorry for this."
Witham said nothing, but shook the reins, and when the waggon lurched forward Dane looked at him.
"I didn't know that before," he said. "Well," said Witham dryly, "if I hadn't lost my temper with the lad you wouldn't have done now."

Dane smiled "You miss the point of

Dane smiled. "You miss the point of the laughing-stock of the colony by favouring Maud Barrington with his attentions when he came out. In fact, I fancy the lady, in desperation, had to turn her uncle loose on him before he

fancy the lady, in desperation, had to turn her uncle loose on him before he could be made to understand that they were not appreciated. I'd keep your eye on him, Courthorne, for the little beast has shown himself abominably vindictive occasionally, though I have a notion he's scarcely to be held accountable. It's a case of too pure a strain and consanguinity. Two branches of the family—marriage between land and money, you see."

"It will be my heel if he gets in my way," said Witham grimly.

It was late when they reached his homestead where Dane was to stay the night, and when they went in a youthful figure in uniform rose up in the big log-walled hall. For a moment Witham's heart almost stood still, and then, holding himself in hand by a strenuous effort, he moved forward and stood where the light of a lamp did not shine quite fully upon him. He knew that uniform, and he had also seen the lad who wore it once or twice before, at an outpost six hundred miles away across the prairie. He knew the risk an outpost six hundred miles away across the prairie. He knew the risk he took was great, but it was evident to him that if his identity escaped deto nim that if ms identity escaped detection at first sight, use would do the rest, and while he had worn a short pointed beard on the Western prairie, he was cleanly-shaven now.

was cleanly-shaven now.

The lad stood quite still a moment staring at him, and Witham returning his gaze steadily felt his pulses throb. "Well, trooper, what has brought you here?" he said.

"Homestead visitation, sir," said the lad, who had a pleasant English voice. "Mr. Courthorne, I presume—accept my regrets if I stared too hard at you—but for a moment you reminded me of a man I knew. They've changed us round lately, and I'm from the Alberta Squadron just sent into this district. It was late when I rode in, and your



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