

country air will help smooth out some of those."

The drive home was a treat to the Boss. Bred in the country, he had never been back to it since the city had swallowed him up. He felt like a boy again. A squirrel scampered along the fence top, and he tried to persuade the Doctor to let him jump out to chase it. The Doctor laughed.

"I've got a sling up at the house that I'll trade you for three allies," he cried, merrily.

As they drove up the long avenue to the house, the Doctor's two collies came bounding down the roadway, jumping at the horses' heads and yelping their delight.

"Down, sir, down!" ordered their owner when they fawned over him. "Whoa, Dobbin. Whoa! Here's the place."

Mary was on the veranda. As she came down the steps and shook hands with Grote, the idea just occurred to the Boss that this was the first time in years he had shaken hands with a woman out of friendliness alone. There were many politicians' wives with whom he was on terms of intimacy; but he felt no personal interest in them. It was a part of the great game to smile and bow to them; it helped to hold their husbands in his ranks. This was different.

"You don't wear your pigtails any more," he said humorously, a gleam of amusement wrinkling up the corners of his eyes. "And you're in long dresses now."

"And have been for the last twenty years," she responded, in mock indignation. "I must have been about in the third book when you were here."

"About there," assented Grote. "You were just nine, I think."

"Don't," she laughed, "you mustn't. That's guessing too near my age. Women don't like that, you know."

After tea they all sat on the long veranda. Grote and the Doctor smoked and talked—talked as if all things would end forever with bed-time. The Doctor told Grote how he had fought his way through college, how he had come to Beaver Creek and after years of hard work, at last built up a successful practice, and then about the discovery of gold on Beaver Creek. He had put every cent he owned into buying the property above and below him. And the Boss listened.

He was glad he had not told the Governor to sign the Bill, and cast about for a way to put it through without hurting Madden. While he was considering, he told Madden about the Bill, what it was intended to do, how the dam would raise the water to make the back land profitable, and how to do it and make it pay expenses, it would be necessary to charge for the water privileges along the front as well. Madden did not say much. His land was all low, and he could see that without benefiting him, the innovation would cost him a mint of money. Mary sized up the situation in a clear-headed way.

"It would be no good to you, Horace," she said. "That's what they call a 'steal,' isn't it?"

It was fortunate for Grote that it was dark. He flushed up to the roots of his hair.

"No," said he, hesitatingly, "it's necessary to do it in order to make the venture pay. Unless the front land is taxed, there is no way of making the high ground back of the edge worth anything."

"It will be all right," commented the Doctor, "if they do not try to charge too much. I have had a good offer for my holdings; maybe I had better take it."

"Yes," Grote advised, earnestly, "take it by all means." He spoke strongly and seized at the opportunity to let his friend out before the squeeze.

"But," said the Doctor, thoughtfully, "if I work it myself—"

"No, no! you take it," said the Boss. "The water bill is likely to run very high along here. You'd better unload while you have the chance."

The lighted end of Madden's cigar swayed from side to side.

"I couldn't do that if I knew it was going to be no good," he answered. "You must see yourself, it wouldn't be honest."

"Well," commented Grote, dryly, "we'll talk about that again. Meantime, I guess it's time to go to bed."

Grote, who never rose before nine, was dressed and out in the morning air before sunrise. With the cool, sweet breath of daybreak in his nostrils, he went for a long tramp down by the riverside, and looked over the ground which Madden had pur-