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## THE HOMESTEADERS

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shanty up the river road. 'Strange things have happened up there, Riles,' he said. That made me suspicious, and I hurried back to the ranch, determined to follow them. I found that my revolver had been taken. I armed myself as best I could, and set out. When I came near the building which Gardiner had mentioned I dismounted and approached it carefully. It was very dark. Suddenly I was attacked from behind. A sack was thrown over my head, and I was overpowered, and bound. I don't know how long I was kept in that condition, but when at last the sack was removed I was in the presence of Sergeant Grey."

With the progress of Travers' narrative all eyes had turned to Gardiner, but, whatever his inward emotions, he outwardly showed no signs of discomfiture. "This seems to be a day of strange tales," he said to the coroner, "and the last we have heard is stranger than the first. Of course, it is quite absurd on the face of it. The suggestion that I would be a party to robbing Mr. Harris of twenty thousand dollars, and so balk a transaction in which I stood to make a profit of more than twice that amount, is too ridiculous for discussion. I didn't say so before, because it didn't seem to bear on the case, but I have at home a telegram which I received a few days ago from the New York investors, offering me a personal commission of twenty per cent. on the transaction if I was able