

Slosson smiled and accepted. The two men faced each other, the elbows of their right arms on the counter, the hands clasped. Slosson's hand quickly forced backward and down.

"You're the first man that ever succeeded in doing it," he said. "Let's try it again."

"Sure," Daylight answered. "And don't forget, son, that you're the first man that put mine down. That's why I lit out after you to-day."

Again they clasped hands, and again Slosson's hand went down. He was a broad-shouldered, heavy-muscled young giant, at least half a head taller than Daylight, and he frankly expressed his chagrin and asked for a third trial. This time he steeled himself to the effort, and for a moment the issue was in doubt. With flushed face and set teeth he met the other's strength till his crackling muscles failed him. The air exploded sharply from his tensed lungs, as he relaxed in surrender, and the hand dropped limply down.

"You're too many for me," he confessed. "I only hope you'll keep out of the hammer-throwing game."

Daylight laughed and shook his head.

"We might compromise, and each stay in his own class. You stick to hammer-throwing, and I'll go on turning down hands."

But Slosson refused to accept defeat.

"Say," he called out, as Daylight and Dede, astride their horses, were preparing to depart. "Say—do you mind if I look you up next year? I'd like to tackle you again."

"Sure, son. You're welcome to a flutter any time. Though I give you fair warning that you'll have to go some. You'll have to train up, for I'm ploughing and chopping wood and breaking colts these days."

Now and again, on the way home, Dede could hear her big boy-husband chuckling gleefully. As they halted their horses on the top of the divide out of Bennett Valley, in order to watch the sunset, he ranged alongside and slipped his arm around her waist.