

Hawtreys let the jibe pass. For one thing, he felt that it was warranted, and just then his anxiety was too strong for anger.

In the meanwhile, Sally ran out of the house to meet Hastings, who had just handed his wife down from their waggon, and drew him a pace or two aside.

"I'm worried about Gregory," she said; "he's in trouble—big trouble. Somehow we have got to raise 3,000 dollars. Edmonds is inside with him."

Hastings did not seem greatly astonished. "Ah!" he said, "I guess it's over that mortgage of his. It would be awkward for you and Gregory if Edmonds took the homestead and turned him out."

Sally's face grew rather white, but she met his gaze steadily.

"Oh," she said, "that's not what I would mind the most."

Hastings reflected a moment or two. He fancied that this was a very difficult admission for the girl to make, and that she had made it suggested that Hawtreys might become involved in more serious difficulties. He had also a strong suspicion of what they were likely to be.

"Sally," he said quietly, "you are afraid of Edmonds making him do something you would not like?"

Though she did not answer directly he saw the shame in the girl's face, and remembered that he was one of Wyllard's trustees.

"I must raise those dollars—now—and I don't know where to get more than five hundred from. I might manage that," she said.

"Well," said Hastings, "you want me to lend you them, and I'm not sure that I can. Still, if you'll wait a few minutes I'll see what I can do."

Sally left him, and he turned to his wife, whose expression suggested that she had overheard part of what was said and had guessed the rest.

"You mean to raise that money? After all, we are