

"What's that I hear?" said Paxter.

"Just fifteen hundred dollars. And two hundred to Paptisto What's-His-Name—he deserves something. Seventeen hundred altogether—and cheap at the price."

"You're mad, Ken.," said Paxter, making as if to resume his digging. But Kendrick Evans caught him by the arm.

"It's your last chance."

"And if I refuse?"

"Listen. I rigged up this plant to get even with you, but none of the boys know why. They thought it was just a joke. I can easily shut their mouths, Pax., with a few drinks, and no one will be any the wiser. But it's the women, Pax., the women."

"The women?"

"Yes. I shall tell my wife, as a strict secret. She'll tell her sister-in-law, and she'll tell Mrs. Someone-Else, and so on all the giddy-go-round. Nice tittle-tattle for Mrs. Paxter to hear at a pink tea—what?"

"You're trying to blackmail me, Ken."

"Gee, you'll have a time. They'll hear in Edmonton, In Red Deer, in Ponoka! Some newspaper guy will publish it, and then all the exchange editors will lift it." Kendrick Evans

was thoroughly enjoying himself!

"It will provide amusement for Montreal, for Toronto, for Halifax. The toilin' masses of South Dakota will read it and snigger—the employees of the John A. Zachary Transporter Company at Joyceville, Nebraska, will devour it with their meals! The comic papers in Australia will have it in full, Pax. The natives of the South Sea Islands will read it when the steamer leaves the next missionary. D'you get me, Pax.?"

Mr. Paxter grunted—it may have been a sigh. "All right," he said.

"Want a pen?" inquired Mr. Evans.

"Got my fountain pen," Mr. Paxter replied, with a ghastly smile. With faltering fingers he wrote out, by the light of the moon, an I. O. U. to K. Evans for the sum of seventeen hundred dollars.

"Leave it here for to-night," said Mr. Evans kindly, placing the I. O. U. in his wallet. "I'll see it gets side-tracked somewhere."

Mr. Romford, who had witnessed the signature in silence, now struck in. "There's one thing I notice," he said, "and that is, as a cemetery for your Venus, you seem to have selected Lot 9, Block 28!"

