

ried," William answered. "Now, we've both always lived pretty well, and I'm afraid that what is a close fit for one will be a closer fit for two. And my father used to tell me that some day he would show me how to double my capital any time I wanted to. Do you know how to do it, Mr. Sharp?" he asked, looking frankly at the senior partner.

The senior partner stared back so hard that his glasses blurred.

"Well—er—it can be done, of course," he answered. "But you understand that there are certain risks attaching, Mr. Alderson. For instance, suppose the stock in which you speculated went down instead of up, or up instead of down—why, it might be serious."

"I guess I can trust you, Mr. Sharp," answered Bill, wringing his hands. "My father used to tell me always to be a bull. Can't you be a bull for me?"

"Well," answered Mr. Sharp, "I happen to have a good thing or two in mind. Suppose you try a flutter in oil. Then I know a nice mine out in Nevada that wants some capital to develop it. And then a half million or so in Mexican copper. I think I can give you a good run for your money, sir."

"All right, I leave it to you," said William, and wrung his hand again and went away.

Three weeks later Sharp and Sharp shut up their offices for good and went away, leaving William with a pile of stock that was pronounced to be worth half a cent on the thousand dollars—said half cent representing the intrinsic value of the paper of excellent quality on which it was printed.

"You ought to be worth about nine hundred dollars," said the government agent, after he had gone through William's affairs. "Yes, Sharp and Sharp took every penny they could get their hands on. I wish I'd intervened sooner. We've had them under observation for months,

but—well, we didn't think they'd get anybody to fall for them like that."

"Hum!" said Bill, and put on his hat and walked round to see Miss Hargreaves.

"Louise, dear," he observed, "I've lost every penny I had."

"So Mr. Sunderland was telling me yesterday," she answered. "What are you going to do, Bill?"

"I'm going west," he answered. "My father told me anybody can make money out west. I guess I'll have to make another fortune before I ask you to set the date for me. Will you wait, dear?"

She looked at him in amazement. She had long known that it would be impossible for her to marry Bill. She had tried to tell him so five or six times, but each time he had so dominated her by his simplicity and candor and good nature that it had been impossible to make him understand. And she flirted twice since they had been engaged! And now he wanted her to wait! It was easy to promise but—well, she knew that he would expect her to wait. And he would be wretched if she were false to him; perhaps it would shatter his faith and make him like other men. To play false with Bill—why, it would be like sacrilege! If she did that she could never be quite happy again.

"I—I'll write to you," she gasped, and fled, choking, up the stairs. That afternoon she wrote Bill a long letter. She told him that she could never marry him, that the loss of his fortune made not the slightest difference, but that she was not worthy of him. So he must let her go and never see her again.

It would have shattered any man's faith, that letter. Bill read it and stayed away. He had made all the preparations for his departure when Sharp and Sharp were caught in Montreal, with one million, nine hundred and seventy-eight thousand dollars of Bill's money salted away. William unpacked his suit case and went round to see Miss Hargreaves.