

matter for once and for all. I shall take the reins in my own hand."

"Your metaphor is ill-placed, Mr. Anthony. We're not driving. Even though we were, who but you would hold the reins?"

The watchers outside strained their eyes and ears and necks to catch every word and motion.

"Don't you understand, darling?" cried Rob. "I mean to ask you for myself, Louise, I love you."

And in a moment he was on his knees at her feet with her hands in his and his eyes looking up beseechingly into her crimson face. The watchers outside were convulsed at this state of affairs, but they finally subdued their risibilities.

"Can you give me no hope—no word of encouragement?" he asked, pleadingly, lifting her hands to his lips.

"Are you sure that your regard is real—that it is not a passing fancy?" she asked, slowly.

"How can you ask me that?" he returned. "Did I not assure you that every word I should speak tonight would be sincere? Do not my actions, my words, my very glance, tell the same story?" he repeated, in a tragic tone.

"Then I can give but one reply," she whispered, softly. "I am yours, Rob, yours and yours only."

And the next moment she was on his breast with his arms about her and her lips to his. But of a sudden there was an unearthly noise from the outside, and some heavy body fell against the door with a shock that threatened to take it from its hinges.

The cause of all this was the unlucky Sid. In his anxiety to see all that was transpiring he had moved too near the edge of the box, and in changing his position at the moment Miss Croft had thrown herself into Rob's arms he had missed his footing and in a second all were floundering in a confused heap in the doorway. In fact, so tangled were they that before they could extricate themselves and get to their feet the door was thrown open from within and Rob and Miss Croft confronted them.

"Well, what does this mean?" asked Rob.

No one answered. Rab Connor, the orator, had lost his tongue. They simply sat there and stupidly stared at one another. At length Rob saw the dust box and began to comprehend.

"Ah," he said to the crest-fallen and discomfited "council," "you were enjoying our acting. Well, gentlemen," with particular emphasis on the last word, "let me introduce to you my