

“’Ow you say, m’sieu?” asked Chicoine.

“I was lettin’ out a family secret. Uncle Cy Pettingill is so old he can’t see nothin’ but a silver dollar, but the colonel here lays a long ways over him. I’d like to see them two old coons git together and jabber about the landin’ of Christopher Columbus.”

“Yes, yes, m’sieu, pair’aps dat would be nice.” Chicoine spoke so seriously that Pettingill had to lean against the wall to laugh.

“Just have my grip sent up to my room,” he said, after a while. “I’ll hang out here a day or two, and see how the climate suits my complexion. And while you’re about it, you might jest as well show me where I am to roost.”

“You want fin’ you’ room? Well, I show you.”

He led Monsieur Pettingill up a narrow stairway into a snug little attic.

“It ain’t bigger ’n a squirrel cage,” said the American.

“It ’ave comfort.” Chicoine stretched his hand toward the stovepipe, which ran through a sheet-iron drum; then he went down.

Charette, Billette, Joutras, and the rest sat just as he had left them. They had neither