

had toiled and watched and prayed for him—and he spoke but simple truth when he said that he chiefly coveted success so that he might be enabled to solace her declining years.

"You want to make a fine lady of your old mother, but that would never do; it's better for me to be as I am. But about going to the Hepworths', Jim. I think when they have been so kind as to ask you, you ought to go; and you have never been to the Island, you know."

"Well, mother, of course I'd like to go well enough, and Hope says the girls are having a rare good time over there. But then, there is the question of the cost, and I really don't like the idea of leaving you all alone—it seems so selfish."

"It will only be for two or three days, dear, and the money won't run to much; better write and say you will go."

"But I thought, mother, you didn't like the girls Flossie and Bossie, as people call them."

This was said with a mischievous twinkle of the eye, but Mrs. Kerruish took the matter seriously and answered with a little sigh,—

"I suppose we old women are hard to please, but it certainly seems as if the girls of to-day are not like those that used to be. However, I don't want to judge any one or to say an unkind word; and I'm sure, too, my boy has more sense than to be led away by any mere outside appearance, by showy clothes or a fuzzy, curly head of hair."

"Oh, mother, mother, is that your way of not saying an unkind word?" interrupted the young man.

"Well, well, I'll say no more about the young ladies," said Mrs. Kerruish, good-humouredly,

"but against Hope, at all events, I have no prejudice. He is such a good friend for you, dear—so steady and yet so bright and clever; they tell me, too, he is in a nice way of business and is sure to get on."

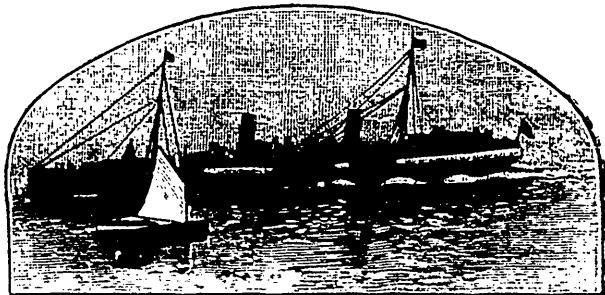
James Kerruish listened to this

encomium with a slight elevation of his eyebrows. He fancied he knew a thing or two about Hope Hepworth, but not wishing to disturb his mother, he simply gave his assent to her final words.

"Oh yes, I think Hope is just the sort of fellow that is sure to get on—safe to do so, I should say."

There was a pause. The watering was finished, and Jim was standing by his mother's side, holding in his warm hand the thin fingers that had awhile since been laid on his arm. Thus they stood silent. Mrs. Kerruish gave a little sigh while her son glanced disconsolately round the miniature garden plot. Yes, Hope Hepworth was of the sort that "get on"—a bright, plausible, pushing fellow. He heard his mother's sigh, and it smote on his ear as though it had been intended as a reproach. What a small return had he been able to make to her for years of devotion! How hardly-earned and yet how poor was his own position at that moment! He was little better than an office boy, and his prospects seemed to be just the average ones of a friendless clerk. And there was his schoolmate, Hope Hepworth, who seemed always to drop on his feet—yes, he had suffered some slips and falls (about which James Kerruish knew more than most other people), but he had always had the luck to "pick himself up." With his varied accomplishments, bright face and plausible manner, he had never lacked friends, and now (with a well-to-do uncle to back him) he was in "a nice way of business." "A lucky fellow was Hope Hepworth," all said; "and deservedly so," the majority were ready to add.

For the first time, young Kerruish



THE ISLE OF MAN BOAT.