

the last that was known of him he was on a reef in the Pacific with three others, while a boatful of people went off to prospect for land. When the boat came back they were gone, and nobody ever knew what became of them."

"And whatever became of the girl, Mrs. Bowers?"

"Oh, as to that, this deponent saith not. Consolated herself, I suppose, in the usual way."

The two women laughed together, and began to pull up their sacks, which had dropped from their shoulders into their chairs behind them.

Helen tried to speak, but she could not. She tried to rise and seize the woman before she left the room, to make her render some account of her words. But the shame of a terrible doubt crushed her with a burden under which she could not move. When the waiter, respectfully hovering near, approached at last, and, viewing her untouched plate, suggestively asked if he could bring her anything more, she said "No," and paid her check and came out.

It was a beautiful day, but she walked spiritlessly along in the sunshine that seemed to smile life into everything but her; and she feebly sought to adjust the pang of this last blow to some misdeed of her own. But she could not. She could only think how she should once have contrasted Lord Rainford's nobleness with Robert's folly, and indignantly preferred him. But now she was aware of not having the strength to do this—of not being able to pluck her heart from the idea to which love and loss had rooted it; and she could not even wish anything but to die. In another world, perhaps—if there were any other world—Robert could explain and justify the weakness for which she could not do other than pity him here.

Her brain was so dull, and jaded withal, that when she dragged herself wearily up the steps at the Butlers' door, she felt no surprise that it should be the old Captain who opened it to her, or that he should seek to detain her in the drawing-room alone with him. At last, she felt some-