
THE SHADOW FALLS

"Ah, blast all this love business anyway, Arthur. Give me the birds an' the flowers for company. That is all I want. A woman will jump into the sea for a man, an' the story holds just as good on the other side. It's the same everlastin' question all the world over, an' it's as old as the hills. Now the women are raked over the coals—now the men. So I am content to steer clear o' all this bloomin' love business. But here's the best thing o' all, Arthur. There's a woman o' my acquaintance—Jemima Jepson's her name. She beats them all. She lost her speech through a bad cold, an' in one small week she had thirty offers of marriage."

"Now, now, Matt, that's a big one," laughed Arthur. "Poor Jemima! Well, I must go, Matt."

Matt, spade in hand, was soon at work again.

"I don't know what's the matter with that boy, at all, at all," he murmured to himself. "He looks so strange. He's got a world o' trouble in his eyes."

When Arthur entered the house he was met by Mrs. Hawkins.

"Where have you been, Arthur? I have been looking all over for you." She spoke nervously.

"I've been out with Matt in the garden."

"Surely not at this hour!"