

"All these little hookers," said Varney, "are listed in a book, which many persons own. Why have the local press tell everybody to-morrow that the yacht *Cypriani* belonging to Mr. Carstairs, husband once-removed to our own Mrs. Elbert Carstairs, is anchored off these shores?"

"It seems," said Peter, "like a lot of smoke for such a little fire."

He got up and sprawled on the rail, his yellow Panama pulled far over his eyes, his gaze fixed on the shining water.

"First and last, I've seen rivers in my time," he said presently, "big and little, pretty and not, clean and soiled, decent and indecent. Yes, boy," said he, "you can take it from me that I've seen the world's darnedest in the matter of rivers, and I have liked them all from Ganges to the Sacramento and back again. There was a time when I didn't have that sort of personal feeling for 'em, but a little chap up in Canada, he helped me to the light. He was the keenest on rivers I ever knew."

He broke off to yawn greatly, started to resume, thought better of it, checked himself, and presently said in an absent voice:

"No, that's too long to tell."

"There's two hours till bedtime."

Peter straightened and began strolling aimlessly about the deck, half regretting that they had decided to spend the evening on the yacht. Varney looked after him with a certain sense of guilt. Against this background of quiet night and moonlit peace, his en-