

business to have followed him after notification of his having passed Cunningham's Gap, but such notification never came. Under other circumstances we should not have waited its procrastinated reception, but set forward ourselves to find the cause of its detention. As it was, the sinews of war had failed and the pioneer of the campaign been despaired of. And the unanimity of condemnation which ostracized the latter on every side, and went so far as to compassionate the credulous friend who yet believed in his integrity, had slowly, though unconfessedly, begun to make its influence felt. I *knew* perfectly well that Fred was not the scoundrel they would make him, but I could not go out into the wilderness to look after him, and with every regret in the world, there was nothing to do but to abandon him to his obscurity.

For, the North Australian Lodge had met and consented to the appropriation of a sufficient sum of money to carry back to the metropolis of the continent the very needy and desolate applicants for their fraternal aid. And I don't believe that of all the moneys which ever passed through the hands of him who tells it, there was one disbursement in purchase of a more glowing satisfaction than that by which, two months later, the debt to Mr. Petrie was redeemed.

Before we next heard from Fred, the conviction had unwillingly grown that what everybody thought of him must be true, and that, through some sudden and mysterious exercise of power on the part of the Evil One, our old friend and true brother had suffered inexplicable metamorphose into scoundrelism. Presently there came a letter, plausible enough, and filled with affectionate protestation, and ingeniously explanatory, by some wonderful tale of accident, not necessary for recital, of how it came, there had been no sign previously made. There were expressed astonishment at our absence, and suggested reproach for the abandonment of joint plans, and urgent enquiry for news of Charley, and bewildered speculation as to future projects. A false, oily, treacherous communication altogether, more shocking even than the actual infamy which it so impudently attempted to gloss over. The only reply possible—the thought of any legal redress, or legal vengeance never once occurring—was a stern disclaimer of any still-existing friendship, and a curt refusal to hold further intercourse of any nature whatever. After that we tacitly avoided his name, and had as nearly as possible forgotten him.

There will be readers of these chapters to remember Mr. Landsborough. On his return from his Van Diemen Gulf Expedition, there was considerable rush to do him honor. The same week there was a grand Masonic Ball in the Hall of the Exchange, and the knowledge that the great explorer would probably be present created peculiar interest in the gathering. About eleven o'clock he arrived, and, turning at the sound of bustle and looking towards the farthest end of the room,