

SOPHONISBA'S UNCLE

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almost violently, "not that it is a joke exactly—Klondyke!"

"You were there too?" asked Sophonisba, excited at mention of that magic place of gold.

"Find somewhere I haven't been if you can," he said wearily, "I'm a travel-tossed adventurer come home like a curse to roost at last. Funny game, life—eh what? Grind, grind, like a regular treadmill." He laughed again. "You start by thinking the world is going to be your football, and it's you that prove the ball, and don't always miss the goal, ha! ha! The thing is to kick back a little harder." His odd light eyes narrowed, and it occurred to me he had had a hard and bitter time of it building up his vast fortune.

Then he went up to his room to unpack, refusing to let either Sophonisba or me accompany him, and the dear girl turned to me and said:

"Perhaps not handsome, exactly, but there is a somethin'. I don't mean distinguished, but he has a great—great—" she sort for the right word, and concluded triumphantly, "personality."

"Is p-p-personality the p-p-polite word for—" began Edward the Second whose presence we had forgotten.

I hushed him hurriedly.

"I wish he'd mind his p's and q's," said Sophonisba with a sigh, "specially his p's, the child does stammer so."

"Oh, hardly stammer, Sophonisba," I hastened to assure her, "merely the slightest, most trifling, hesitation."

"He who hesitates is lost," she said gloomily, "then you are too late for everythin'. People who drawl and stammer can't keep up with the race of life."