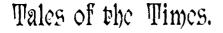
OUR SOCIETY.



A BIG SWINDLE.

OMEONE suggested, the other day, that the Autobio-graphy of a Company Promoter would make a good shilling shocker. I daresay it would it shilling shocker. I daresay it would, if an experienced man could be got to put it together. If there be such an individual on the face of the earth as a company pro-

ter with literary tendencies, he is welcome to the idea, and in h er to further facilitate the work, I will give him my experiences.

might find himself hard up for a chapter, and if so he might Cuvorse than fill up the hiatus with the following account of how ; coated the Great Eye-sore Reef.

a The beginning of the business was thuswise. In June, 1890, alold schoolfellow of mine, who had spent the best part of his , knocking about abroad, looked me up at my office, and in the d rse of conversation, said that he had bought some land out at e. Cape. "I gave a few shillings an acre for it; but, as a matter of fact,

on't suppose it is worth as many pence. You don't happen to ow anyone, I suppose, who would like to take it off my hands? is of no earthly use to me, and I'm rather in want of money t now, so I should be glad to take what I gave for it, and have 10 with it for ever."

CI asked for particulars, and Atkins told me all I required, and Cwed me a plan. I kept the papers, and, saying that I thought new someone who might be inclined to entertain the matter, him to call the following day.

That evening I ran across the very man I wanted in the fiterion grill-room. He was mixed up in company business, and ow every inch of South Africa, for he had floated a score of rican mines, including the Tum-Tum Reefs, Pumpkins, Limited, Sausage-and-Mashed Consols, and others equally well known fame as frauds of the very finest and first water. We had a the, and I showed him the plans. He looked at them carefully then said, "How much does your friend want for the land?"

amed the price, and without a moment's hesitation, and in a y firm and decided tone of voice, he said, "You buy it, my boy, I d I'll help you to put it into a company. We ought to make a dish bit out of it, both of us, for I see that it is only a mile or ro from the Watercress Reef, which has been paying 15 per cent. er since it started."

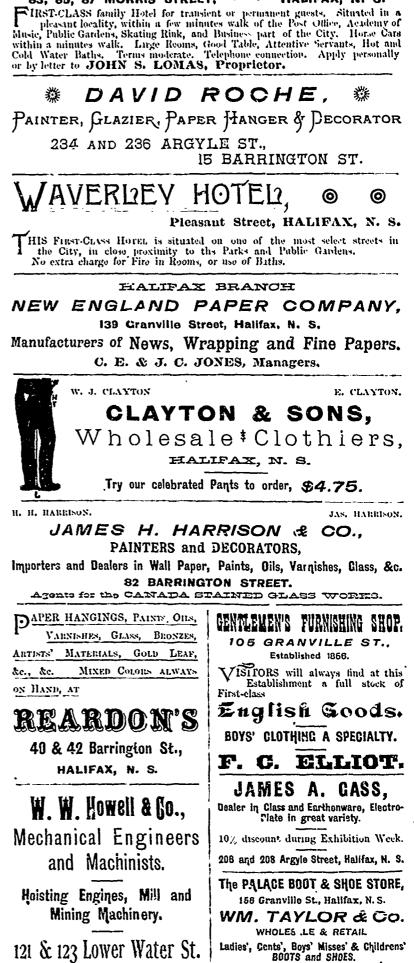
"But a mile or two-

Philips laughed, "Oh, you ain't up to snuff, dear boy. We Su't tell people it's a mile or two, you bet. In the prospectus Il state the distance in kilometres or decimals, or something nich nobody will understand, and they'll think it's next door to e Watercress Reef. The 15 per cent. will have to be starred in g type and red ink, and if that don't fetch 'em, I don't know hat will. You buy the land, dear boy, and then come to me."

n I took his advice and hought the land, giving Atkins a bit r pore than he asked, just for the sake of old times, don't you know. presen the property was transferred to me, that part of the business rtising looked after by a solicitor, Mr. Markby, whom Philips in-

iduced to me as "a real scorcher, and no mistake." And that I assignd him to be. The wonder to me is that he has existed so n the without being struck off the rolls : but either the Incorporatin ti Law Society is very blind, or his deluded clients singularly ssiond-mannered and forgiving, for thus far no one has called him tron ecount, and if he only lives long enough he ought to have no ic citiculty whatever in qualifying for a very front seat in Hades. oring Well, Markby saw the thing through, and did the business It aply-not for love, bless you, but on the distinct understandratur that he should be made solicitor to the company when it was e abimed. Preliminaries settled, Phillips dined with me, and over

cigars we proceeded to discuss the next step. "Instead of floating the company at present," he said between whiffs, "I advise you to wait a bit. To begin with, it is the



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