

companion had got clear away from the results of the blasting.

As Elgar had to be away for a part of every day delivering goods, he had taken the precaution of shutting the store for two or three hours in the middle of the afternoon, when there was only a little business doing, for he could not risk having his little cousins frightened by any more encounters with thieving Chinamen, and it was quite out of the question for Mrs. Townsford to spare any time for the store.

He had shut the place up one afternoon, about ten days after his uncle's accident, and was dragging a heavy truck of goods up a little back trail to some huts on the cliff above the jetty, when he saw an old man sitting on a lump of lumber by the side of the trail, and at the second glance recognised him as Reuben Shore. Indeed it would be difficult not to recognise him, for even in that community of hard-working, hard-living, and in some instances almost desperate men, it would be unusual to find more than one man with such a seamed, lined, and almost venomous face as that which Reuben Shore presented to the public gaze.

Elgar was almost inclined to pass him by without speaking, but his scout duty insisted on courtesy to all men, especially the feeble and the old. So he eased his truck up as he approached, and lifting his cap, enquired if the old man were better.

"I'm well enough, and don't want none of your sass," grunted Reuben under the impression that he was being made fun of, and then Elgar, whose temper was by no means perfect, flew all to pieces, and forgot that he was a scout, pledged to courteous conduct and helpful ways.