



THE Banner of Faith.

AUGUST 1886.

Hope: the Story of a Loving Heart.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Westalls had not set out for the new country without some definite plans. Hope had been very busy before starting, studying handbooks to the colony, and gaining information from trustworthy sources as to a suitable spot to settle down in. Harold was really interested in the matter. He had no objection to the idea of becoming a prosperous settler, and living like a sort of little lord on his own estate. 'It would suit him down to the ground,' he said.

But once on shipboard his new friends stepped in and laughed at the idea. A settler's life? All grind and anxiety—slavery from morning till night. A man with capital like Harold—he had bragged a little of that green baize bag and its contents, you see—could do far better than that; could grow rich directly in New Zealand without trouble or bother of any kind.

How? Ah, *that* these disinterested advisers affected to be unable to disclose to every one. If Mr. Westall really meant business, why they were prepared to let him at once into a very good thing—a company just formed. There would be a glorious rush for shares directly the prospectus was out. Every one's hundred would become a thousand

before you could say Jack Robinson. With such fair words was the trap baited for poor silly Harold. It would be very nice for him to be the owner of three thousand instead of three hundred pounds, he thought. Other men had made fortunes in the colonies, and why not he?

If only Hope was not such a marplot! She had no spirit.

Harold set foot on the new soil with a restless, dissatisfied heart. He and Hope took up their abode at once in a lodging kept by a respectable Englishwoman, to which they had been directed, to save hotel expenses. It was in a very quiet part of Auckland. 'Deadly dull,' Harold said.

He was out till late the first evening—looking after their heavy baggage, he said—in reality lounging about in the docks with his ship friends, and finally following them to their grand hotel. When he came in he said little to her, but Hope could not but notice a suppressed excitement in his manner. He could not sleep, he said, so it was of no use going to bed; he should just put his legs up on the sitting-room sofa.

Hope left him there with a sigh, it would only anger him if she sat up too. And why should she? This was a respectable house, and she was very tired. Before she left the room, however, she turned to her husband. 'Perhaps I had better take the carpet-bag