

York weekly (whose editor had proved partial to his sketches and stories of "doings" in the Imperial Army), he produced some of the regimental stationery and began a letter to Miss Travers. It was no easy undertaking — the writing of this particular letter. After struggling for some minutes with the first sentence, he leaned back in his chair and fell into retrospection. His age was now twenty-nine years. He had done with Sandhurst at twenty-one, and had been in the army ever since; had seen more than his share of foreign service, and two seasons of border-scraping in Northern India. He had gone ahead in his chosen profession, despite a weakness for reading poetry in bed and writing articles descriptive of people and things he knew. During his father's lifetime his allowance (though he was but a third son) was ample, and even enabled him to play polo, and shortly after his father's death an almost unknown great-aunt had left him a modest little sum — not much of a fortune, but a very comfortable possession. Two years previous to his present troubles he had fallen in love. So had the girl. A year ago he had proposed and been accepted. He had, for her sake, fathered a reckless, impecunious subaltern, by name Penthouse, lending him money and endorsing his notes, and now he was stripped bare to his pay. If he had never