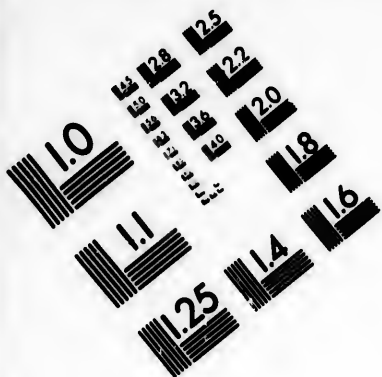

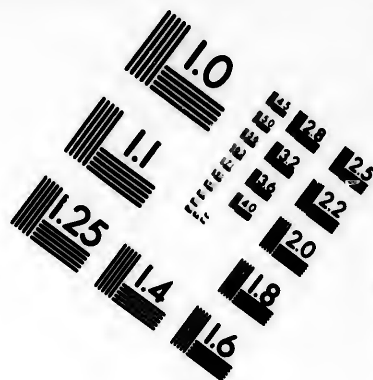

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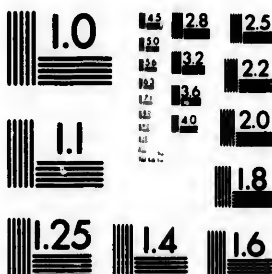

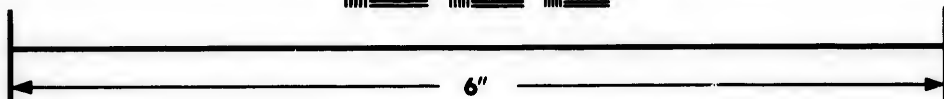

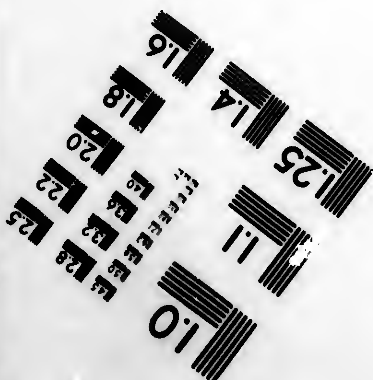

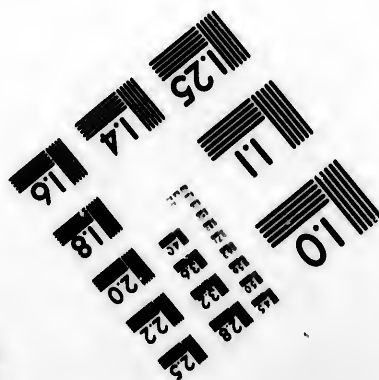

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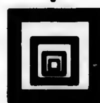

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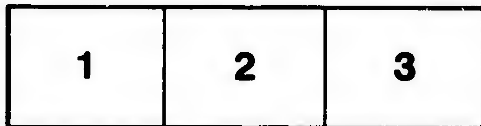

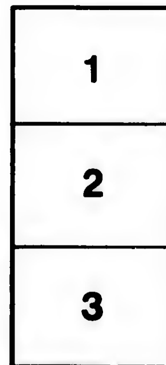

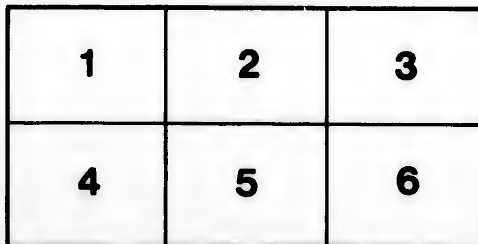

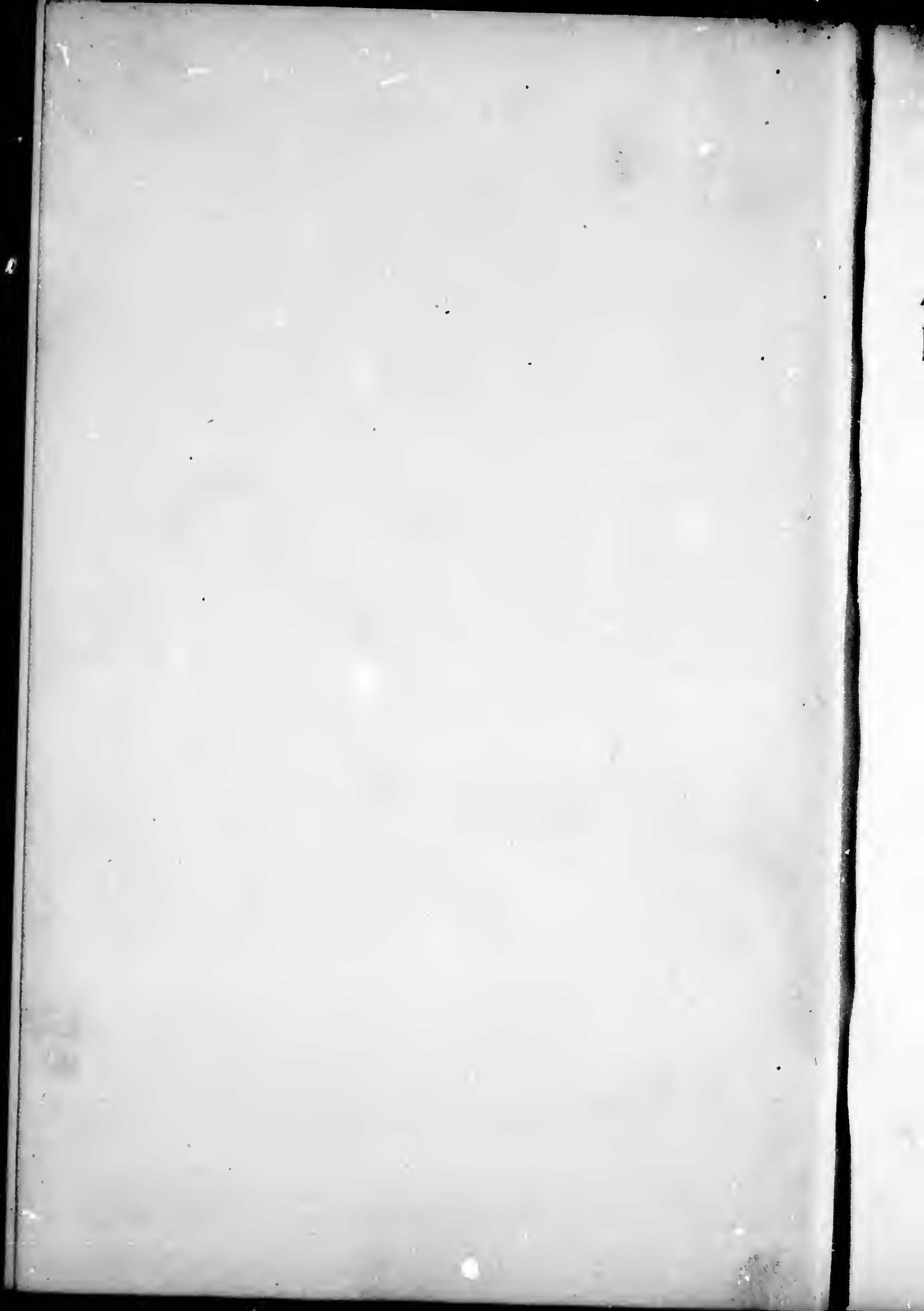

AS IT WAS . . . IN THE FIFTIES

—BY--

" KIM BILIR."

Author of "Three Letters of Credit" and Other Stories.

VICTORIA, B.C.
The Province Publishing Company.
1895.

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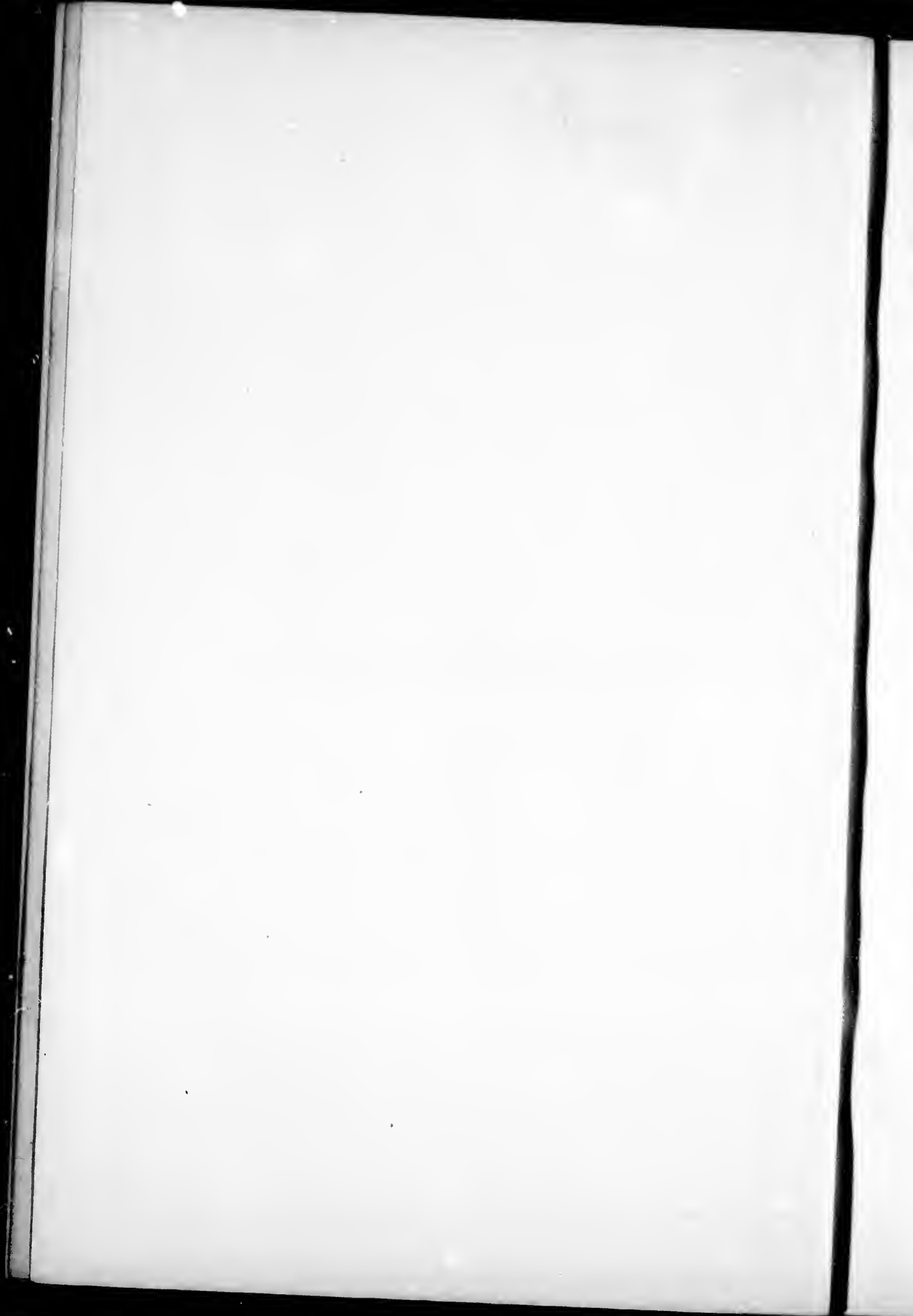
TO

The Man

WHO OUGHT TO HAVE WRITTEN

THIS BOOK

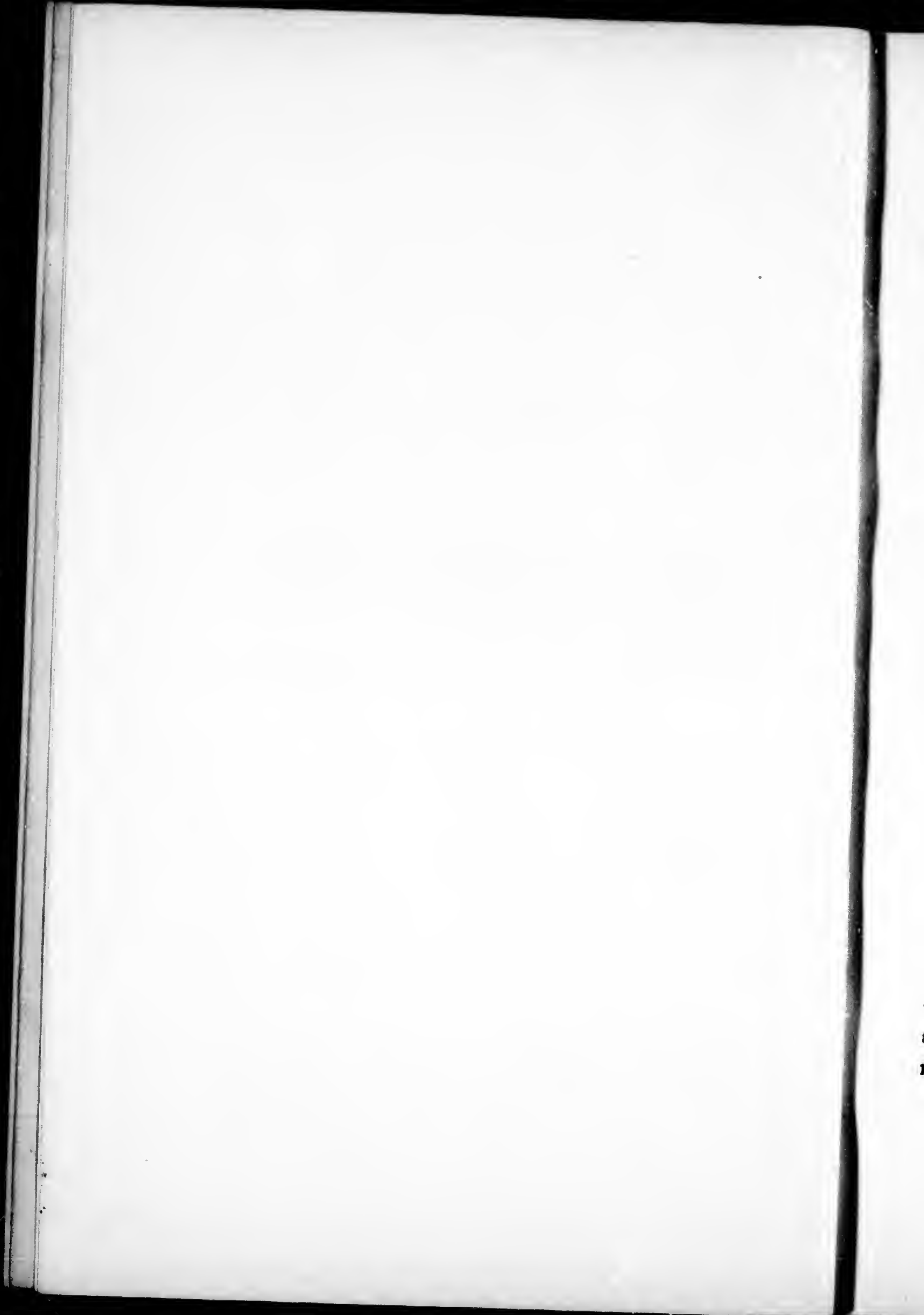
BUT . . . WOULDN'T.



This Story appeared as a serial in the pages of the THE PROVINCE and I am indebted to the proprietors of that paper for permission to publish it in book form.

KIM BILIR.

VICTORIA, B.C., JULY, 1895.



CHAPTER I.

HE NAME of Evan Evans was a household word in the Dead Letter Office. For four generations a certain desk had been occupied by a bearer of that ancient and highly respectable patronymic, and no letter was ever considered thoroughly defunct until its funeral oration had been pronounced by an Evan Evans. A conservative family the Evans's; Welsh —very much Welsh, as their name implies—with a pedigree reaching far, far back beyond mortal ken till it became merged in the halo surrounding the palace, or, more probably, the hovel of an original Cambrian king.

The Evans's were proud of their royal descent, but they never made any boast of it, not even to the extent of parading a family tree. It was their privilege, in common with other Welshmen, to be descended from royalty, and in the magnanimity of their race they would have been quite ready to associate on even terms with Anglican dukes and marquises of even recent creation had opportunity

offered, which unfortunately it never did, for the Evans's of whom I write did not live in a Belgravian mansion nor attend court functions. Their means were not nearly so large as was their family pride, and dukes and marquises were not nearly so common as donkey boys on Hampstead Heath, where they resided, not so much from choice as from necessity.

"The Guv'nor," as the boys called him, was No. 4 in the hierarchy of Evans's who had entered the Dead Letter Office on his seventeenth birthday at a salary of forty pounds per annum, payable quarterly, with the prospect of rising ten pounds a year till he could show a clean record of twenty years consecutive dead lettering. After that he would go up like a sky rocket at double the annual rate of increase for the next quarter of a century, when he would be retired with the thanks of a grateful country on half-pay for the rest of his natural life.

Evan Evans was perfectly content with his prospects, and Elizabeth, his wife, whom he had taken unto himself some twenty years ago, was of the same mind also, and they cut their coat—not to mention the boy's knickerbockers—according

to their cloth and always had at least a quarter of an inch to spare.

An exceedingly economical man was Evan Evans; some people—among whom I'm afraid, to be truthful, I must reckon "the boys"—said he was mean; but, like the village blacksmith, he looked the whole world in the face for he owed not any man, and his happiness in having a quiverful of eight on a salary of two hundred and fifty a year never positively overflowed.

On one occasion which "the boys" never forgot he gave an omnibus conductor half a sovereign instead of a sixpence—at least that was the only way in which he could account for being for the first and last time in his life nine and sixpence out in his accounts at the end of the week. The whole family was in a turmoil for days in consequence; the boys were cross-examined in a manner which they deeply resented and never forgave, and the cook, for similar reasons, gave warning on the spot, thereby exercising a privilege which Evan, the eldest boy, remarked he only wished he enjoyed himself, as he should instantly take advantage of it.

Cupboards were rummaged, boxes and drawers

and packets turned out, every article of furniture in the house moved, carpets and oil cloths taken up at a cost, as Master Evan joyously calculated, of about fifteen shillings. He drew up an account which was surreptitiously circulated amongst "the boys" and enjoyed an enormous success. It was headed "The Guv'nor's Latest Spec," and was itemized as follows:

	£	s.	d.
To done in the eye by 'bus conductor.. £		9	6
To good money chucked after bad, viz.:—			
(1) Cost of moving carpets, furniture, etc.		15	0
(2) Advertisement for new cook		5	0
(3) Postage			6
(4) Difference wages 2s. per month to new cook for one year	1	4	0
(5) Doctor's bill for attending Mother; ill ten days because guv'nor kicked up such a beastly row. Four visits at 5s. 6d.	1	2	0
Total loss .£	3	16	0

Moral: When you get done in the eye by a 'bus conductor give your sons and daughters five bob each all round; it will cost you less money in the end and tend to promote filial affection.

Evan Evans prided himself on being a just man, but justice in this wicked world of ours has a ten-

dency, possibly of necessity, to be hard: and there was certainly nothing soft about Evan Evans. He never went back on his word; he ruled his wife and daughters with a rod of iron, his sons with a thin malacca cane as being more flexible and capable of greater execution. He was fond of his woman kind, that is to say, of his wife and daughters three, but if he entertained any affection for "the boys" his efforts to conceal its existence were so successful that he managed to convey a totally different idea to the outside world. He did not understand boys; he entered into none of their games nor pleasures, and looked upon the holidays as a semi-annual nuisance—for schools had only two vacations a year in those days. Evan, the eldest boy, used to say the Guv'nor was born at forty.

"The little mother," as the boys always called her, ever did her best to smooth matters over and act as a buffer between father and sons, but she was in reality afraid of both, and probably suffered most, as buffers frequently do, in the family encounters. The boys said they hated "the Guv'nor." They told their mother so, which made her miserable. The Guv'nor said the boys were the burden of his life, which made her

worse, so, taking one consideration with another, "the little mother's" lot was not a happy one.

Evan was a boy of no less determined character than his father, and when on his seventeenth birthday, in accordance with family usage and tradition, the time came for him to occupy for the first time the reserved and ancestral seat in the Dead Letter Office, he produced the equivalent of a cyclone at the breakfast table by blurting out without any warning:

"Oh, I say, Mother, I'm not going into the Dead Letter Office."

The entire family looked up (it was holiday time and they were all there) in consternation. The Guv'nor laid down the morsel of fried bacon he was in the act of carrying to his mouth, untasted. He had had fried bacon for breakfast for twenty-five years, but the boys only had porridge. He put his knife and fork together, gazed fixedly across the table over his spectacles at his son, cleared his throat and said, calmly:

"Elizabeth, my dear, I think I'll take another cup of tea," and he handed her his cup as if nothing had happened.

Mrs. Evans poured out her husband's tea with a trembling hand, and the rest of the family mas-

ticated so slowly that they might have been mistaken for cows chewing the cud. All the taste had gone out of the porridge. The rest of the boys glanced at Evan under their eyebrows, half in fear, half in admiration of his temerity. What was going to happen next? Miriam, the eldest girl, two years older than Evan, sniffed audibly; Esther, next in her point of age, looked dangerously like crying, while Janet, the youngest, only seven years old, began to howl.

"Elizabeth, my dear," said the Guv'nor, as he took his second cup of tea, "send that child away."

The child required no further bidding. She got up and rushed from the room, followed immediately by her two sisters.

No one said a word. The little mother motioned the rest of the boys to go, and Harold, David, Ross and Arnold all tramped out of the room in order of age, leaving Evan alone to sustain the the cross-fire of his parent's cannonade.

He felt terribly uncomfortable; he was in the region of the unknown, which always induces a feeling of nervousness. He didn't know what was coming next, and he wished that he hadn't

broken the ice with a sledge hammer. He wasn't prepared for the Guv'nor ignoring him in this way. He thought there would have been "an awful shindy;" that they would all have lost their tempers and had a general row, and that he would have been enabled to maintain his point, though he didn't exactly know how, through the *melée*. But this death-like stillness and chilling unconcern were more than the boy had bargained for.

The little mother looked at her husband, but he was reading the morning's *Times*, which it was his daily custom to prop up against the sugar-basin; then she looked at Evan, who was staring out of the window with a strained, hard look upon his face ill in keeping with his seventeen years. The clock struck half-past eight. The Guv'nor folded *The Times* and rose from his seat.

"You'd better not be late for the 'bus," he said to Evan, and he passed out of the room.

The 'bus left for the city at a quarter to nine, and it took five minutes to walk from the house to the crossroads where it started. The Guv'nor had'nt missed it once in twelve years, and he certainly wasn't going to miss it to-day.

As he left the room the little mother rose from

her seat, and, standing behind Evan's chair, put both her arms around his neck; she laid her cheek against her son's, and said softly:

"What is it, Evan dear; tell me?" Evan stroked her face with his hand, but still looked out of the window. "Tell me," said his mother again; "why did you say you wouldn't go into the Dead Letter Office? What has made you change your mind?"

"I haven't changed my mind," he said, almost fiercely. "Who ever asked me if I wanted to go into the beastly place; I hate the very name of it. I want to go back to school; I'm in the upper fifth now and should get my remove into the sixth next term and be captain of the eleven. Didn't I tell the Guv'nor so; and what did he do? Refused to go into the question at all—said he knew what was best for me, and all that rot—that I must go into the Dead Letter Office as he and half a dozen of the grand paters did before him. Well! as I can't do what I want, by Jove! I won't do what he wants; I'll strike out on my own account. I loathe the idea of being shut up in a stuffy hole like that from ten till six. Oh, I know what you are going to say, mother. It's in

the family, and all that rot. What's the family ever done for me? What's the Guv'nor ever done?"

"Oh, hush, hush Evan!" said his mother; "don't speak against your father."

"Oh, well, mother, I don't want to hurt your feelings, you know; but the Guv'nor hasn't got any to hurt so it don't matter. But what's the good of jawing about it? If he's so set on having one of us in his office he can take Harold next year; but he doesn't want to have any of us, really,—all he wants' is to keep up the old tradition, and it doesn't even occur to him to think whether we like it or not. Does he ever think about anything any of us like, except you and the girls? He hates the sight of us, but, by Jove! not more than we hate the sight of him!"

"Oh, Evan, Evan, don't say that!" pleaded his mother, tearfully. "You know it isn't true; your father is so—"

"Yes, mother, I know what you're going to say —so kind and good to every one but us boys. He goes to church twice and makes notes on the sermon every Sunday evening, and I hate going to church, and I'm blowed if you'll ever get me to make notes on the sermon." The boy was

walking up and down the room by this time in a state of suppressed excitement. "What have I ever done—what have the others done to the Guv'nor that he should treat us as he does? I tell you what it is, Mother, I'm not going into that office—I don't care what the Guv'nor does. It's no use his trying to lick me, because I won't stand it, and he knows that well enough. All he can do is to turn me out of doors."

The little mother was crying bitterly by this time. Just then a footstep sounded outside the dining-room door. She hurriedly dried her eyes. She knew it was her husband putting on his coat and hat and she went, as was her daily wont, outside to assist him. The guv'nor stooped down and presented his cheek as was also his daily wont. Mrs. Evans had to stand on tip-toe even then. As she kissed him she said:

"Couldn't you wait a moment, dear, and speak to Evan? I think if you said a few kind words to him you could bring him round."

Evan Evans looked at the clock on the stairs; it was twenty-four minutes to nine.

"What's the matter with the boy?" he asked. "I don't understand." (That is exactly what

the matter was, if he'd only known it. He did not understand.)

"Oh, do stop till the next 'bus, dear, and speak to him properly," pleaded Mrs. Evans; "you can't have a good long talk in four minutes."

"I can say all I have to say in two," replied the Guv'nor shortly.

He went into his sanctum, a tiny box of a room off the hall, opened his desk and wrote out a check for £30, payable to bearer. On a slip of paper he wrote:

Dear Evan:—If you have thought better of your foolish utterance I too am willing to forget it. If you are still of the same mind take the enclosed cheque for £30 and do what you like with it, but never let me see or hear from you again. If you are not at the office by 10 a.m. this morning I shall know you have decided against my wishes, and that you consider yourself competent to make your own way in the world without further assistance or consideration from your affectionate father. E. E.

12th May, 185—.

He reread the letter; he did not show it to his wife but folded it, put it in an envelope with the cheque and addressed it, Evan Evans, Esq., jr., favour of Mrs. Evans.

"Oh, Evan!" said the poor little mother; "what have you done?"

"What I consider to be my duty," said the Guv'nor sternly. "Give that to Master Evan. I've given him a last chance, which is more than he deserves. No one shall say I've been hard on the boy" and he marched out of the house just in time to catch his morning 'bus.

CHAPTER II.

SCARCELY had the front door closed behind him than there was a rush down stairs of fourteen feet of all sizes, belonging to the remaining members of the family, who had been congregated still as mice on the front floor landing to pick up such scraps of information as they might.

"Hush, children, hush!"

"Oh, Mother, what is father going to do to Evan?" asked Janet. He isn't going to beat him, is he?"

"Shut up, Baby, " said Evan, for they were in the dining room by this time. The boy was standing by the window and had seen his father walk down the little path.

"I think it's a beastly shame," said Arnold.

"Hold your row, youngster," said Evan. "What do you know about it?"

Such a hubbub and commotion followed as only eight young people can raise. The little mother

was lost in it all, and looked helplessly from one to the other. She still held her husband's letter in her hand. Miriam caught sight of it first. She had wonderfully sharp eyes, had Miss Miriam; few things escaped her.

"Whom is the letter for?" she asked, and she took it out of her mother's hand.

"Evan, it's for you," she said, "from father."

Evan snatched it and opened it. This brought the little mother to her senses. Evan read the letter through; his mother came and looked over his shoulder and read it too. Then she sat down and cried silently. Evan's face was perfectly white and his voice trembled slightly.

"Mother, dear," he said, "I'm awfully sorry to leave you and the others."

"Oh, Evan, my boy, my boy, don't say that you are going away? Your father will come round; he isn't really hard, Evan, dear.

"Well, I don't know about that, Mother; I rather think he is—but never mind, I'm not coming round. I've made up my mind I'm going."

"Oh, where are you going?" sobbed Mrs. Evans.

"I'm going" said Evan, slowly and deliberately, "to British Columbia."

This was a bombshell only second in point of explosive effect to the dynamite cartridge which Evan had dropped at the breakfast table.

"To British Columbia!" they all cried aghast, "Where is it?"

"I know," said David; "it's in South America."

"Idiot!" said Evan; "it's nothing of the kind. It's in North America. There's a fellow at school—he's in my form—who has a brother out there. He wrote home some time ago and says it's a grand place—lots of gold. He found a nugget weighing forty pounds, or something—anyhow it was a whacking big one. Then there are grizzly bears and Indians. He's shot a lot of them himself."

"What Indians?" asked Miriam.

"No grizzles, stupid," replied Evan

"Well, why didn't you say so," retorted Miriam, who always had the last word.

"Oh, mother, I should like to go too," in chorus from the other boys.

Evan was the hero of the hour. They all talked at once after the manner of youth in delighted admiration of Evan's audacity. His mother couldn't get a word in for about ten minutes, but

at last she managed to make herself heard.

"But, my dear boy, what are you thinking of? What will your father say?"

"Oh! the guv'nor," said Evan with a hard laugh. "He's given his answer already; here it is," and he waived his father's letter. "Thirty pounds, just think of it! Fred Harrison's kit cost £100, I know, and his guv'nor gave him £50 in his pocket besides. The Evans' were always famed for their munifience. But don't you fear, I'll get along all right." And Evan proceeded to submit plans and specifications (mostly in elevation) of his future fortunes in British Columbia on a capital of thirty pounds, less cost of outfit and journey.

The little mother tried her utmost to shake the boy's determination. She had the girls on her side, the boys naturally sided with their brother.

But Evan with the impetuosity due to his own youth and obstinacy inherited from his father, overrode all obstacles. The morning went in fruitless endeavours to alter his purpose, and by lunch time Mrs. Evans had come to the conclusion that his mind was irrevocably made up. She dreaded telling her husband, for this was the first time his

decision had not been law to every member of the family, and she didn't quite know what the effect would be.

The ink bottle has a fatal fascination for some characters, which as a rule are not of the strongest calibre, and Mrs. Evans thought it would be easier to write than to speak to her husband. She could send a note by one of the boys to his office so that he might have plenty of time to think the matter over before coming home. The eldest girl, Miriam, without whose counsel she never did anything even to the extent of buying a postage stamp, approved of this step, so she sat down and wrote a deeply involved letter of four pages crossed, with a postscript, to her husband, telling him exactly what had happened, and begging him to be kind and affectionate to the boy in the hope of altering his decision. Harold took it in to London, walking both ways to save the 'bus fare, and this is the answer he brought back:

Dear Elizabeth:—I have nothing whatever to add to my letter of this morning to Evan. If he wishes to go to British Columbia, he is at liberty to go there or anywhere else he chooses. His movements henceforth neither affect nor interest me. My house is no longer his home, and I shall therefore expect to find that he has started when

I return home this evening, as I do not desire to submit him to the indignity of forcible expulsion.

Your affectionate husband.

May 12th, 185— E.E.

"All right, mother dear, don't you worry," said Evan, after this gracious epistle had received its full share of family condemnation. "I'll go to Uncle Bob's till I can find a ship. He won't turn me out."

Uncle Bob was Mrs. Evans' brother. He was a retired captain in the navy, and a great friend of the boys. He and his brother-in-law didn't hit it off as well as they might, for they were as diametrically opposed in character as it is possible for two men to be. The only subject upon which they had any ideas in common was chess, and every Saturday night for years they had played the king of games. The only reason why they played it without quarrelling was because the game was a silent one. The two old gentlemen would sit for hours intently watching the chess-board, and frequently the whole evening passed without a move being made by either of them. The children detested chess because it robbed them of Uncle Bob's society. The boys one and all were devoted to him, mostly, as they explained,

because they could say what they liked to him and he didn't mind

"Uncle Bob's so jolly good-natured, you see, mother. He isn't like the guv'nor."

Poor Mrs. Evans! These home truths were bitter to hear, for she revered her husband and had a deep affection for him. He had always been kind to her, and it was a constant grief to her to note now wide, and apparently unbridgeable, a breach existed between her sons and their father. As for the girls, they adored Uncle Bob. But for his escort they would never have gone anywhere nor seen anything, for the guv'nor didn't approve of the boys taking their sisters about. Captain Rolston had only his pension, and lived in a tiny cottage about a mile from the Evans', with an old one-armed marine who had served him for years, as his factotum and bodyguard.

"Poor devil," the Captain used to say, "couldn't turn him out, you know, and by gad it's astonishing what the beggar can do with that one hand of his. Besides, he knows my ways by this time, and that counts for a deal in this life, let alone the next."

The Captain's religious views were heterodox, and a source of constant trouble and distress to

Mrs. Evans, but she consoled herself with the comforting reflection that "Bob was such a dear good fellow at heart that one of these days he was sure to come round." The brothers-in-law were opposed on every conceivable point, but particularly on religion, for Evan Evans was an extremely low churchman and the Captain was no churchman at all. He never paraded any particular views, and considered it a point of honour to avoid all allusion to religious matters in conversation with his nephews, though Uncle Bob was the recipient of all the family troubles. The boys always went to him with their tales of woe about the guv'nor, and but for his sensible cheery way of getting them to see things in his own light there would probably have been a rupture long ere this.

"Don't talk nonsense, boys," he would say. "Must have discipline at any price. You can't command a family of headstrong unruly boys any more than you can a ship's company without discipline. You don't like the guv'nor's ways! Well, I dare say you don't. Can't say I'm enamoured of 'em myself sometimes, but that's only a matter of opinion. Do you think the guv'nor wants to do you fellows harm or good?"

"Well, Uncle Bob, I'm hanged if I know," Evan, who was generally spokesman, would answer.

"Which is but another way of expressing that you're not quite sure in the matter. Give your father the benefit of the doubt, my boy. You'll never regret it. Always give every one the benefit of the doubt."

"Yes, but Uncle Bob—"

"But me no buts, boy. The only complaint you boys have to make is that your father seems to you a little hard and unsympathetic, and whacks you rather more frequently than you find agreeable. I haven't the faintest doubt you deserve it. The guv'nor isn't perfect, nor am I, nor is any mother's son of us on this earth; but I'll tell you what it is, there isn't a man of higher principle living than Evan Evans. He's brought up a jolly sight more of you than there ought to be, and clothed you, and educated you, and doesn't owe any one a brass farthing, and the Lord only knows how he does it, for I don't. His life has been one long series of self denials, and I wish I was like him in many things."

The boys would mentally thank their stars that he wasn't, but they did not argue with Uncle Bob

when he talked in this strain. The Captain never let them know how often he fought their battles for them, and though in his heart of hearts he grieved scarcely less than did his sister at the want of geniality and affection existing between the boys and their father, he gave them no sign that he sympathised with them.

Under these circumstances when Evan expressed his determination to go to Uncle Bob's, no one was a bit surprised. It was the natural thing for him to do.

"I'll tell you what it is," continued Evan, "I'll have to go pretty soon. By jove, it's four o'clock now, and I'm to be out of the house by the time the guv'nor's back, sharp six. Well, I haven't too much time to pack."

Esther, the second girl, Evan's senior by only a year, had come close up to her brother during the conversation and linked her arm into his. With her other hand she held her mother's. Esther was the boy's favourite. Miss Miriam, as they called their eldest sister, they couldn't bear. The duty of keeping them in order devolved upon her when the guv'nor wasn't there, and she revelled in the privilege, but Esther never kept any one in order. She was everybody's favourite,

and could do more with her father than any of them, which, however, wasn't saying much.

"I'll pack your things for you, Evan," she said.

"Indeed you won't," snapped Miss Miriam. "I shall pack his things, besides you don't know where half of them are. That reminds me, the wash! Arnold, run over at once to Mrs. Price's and take this note."

She hastily scribbled off her instructions.

"Bring them with you," she said, "rough dried if they are not ready, which they ought to be. You other three boys go too," she added, "it will keep you out of the way while I do some mending," and she bustled the four of them out of the room.

"Come along, Janet, you can help me."

"Mother," said Esther, gently, "let's go round the garden with Evan," and the little mother suffered herself in a dazed kind of way to be led off with Evan's strong arm supporting her.

The trio walked silently round the little plot, perhaps a quarter of an acre in extent, which the boys had known so well from their infancy. None of them spoke, they all took after their father in

self-restraint, and when they felt most they showed least.

Round they went several times. "Oh, Evan," said Esther, "say good bye to Punch."

"Yes," answered Evan, slowly, "I'll say good bye to Punch."

Punch was an ancient retriever, a dozen years old at the least, whom the boys had had since he he was a puppy, almost blind now and very fat. He was lying on his side, half asleep, outside his kennel, and didn't even take the trouble to raise his head when Evan patted him, he only twitched one ear.

"Punch old boy, I'm going away, and I shall never see you again. You'll be dead and buried long before I come back."

Punch's tail thumped joyously on the ground as if he relished the prospect of immediate dissolution.

"Good bye, old chap, we've had some good times together."

The boy brushed his hand across his eyes.

"I say, mother, I'm awfully sorry to go, upon my soul, I"—and his voice choked.

For all reply the little mother raised a tearful face to his, and he bent down and kissed her, but she did not ask him again to stay.

"God bless you and keep you, my darling," she said, "you have been a good son to me all these years, and it breaks my heart to let you go. But, oh, Evan, you will write to me often, very often, won't you?"

At this moment Miss Miriam's head appeared at one of the upstairs windows, and Miss Miriam's shrill voice called out: "Mother, come in at once. I can only find three pair of Evan's socks, and four handkerchiefs."

"Yes, yes, dear, I'm coming," answered Mrs. Evans.

"We'll all go," said Esther, "and Janet and I will get you some tea." Tea is a great comforter.

"Hang Miss Miriam," muttered Evan.

"Oh, don't be cross, dear," said Esther, "when you're going away."

He pressed her arm and they all went in together.

In another hour Evan had gone and the household in fear and trembling awaited the return of it's lord and master. The clock had scarcely

struck six when his latch key was heard in the lock.

"I'll go and see father," said Esther rising from the stool at her mother's side, who was lying down on the sofa.

Mrs. Evans looked her gratitude and Esther went out.

"Where's your mother?" said Evan Evans, at once, for never, unless prevented by illness had she missed welcoming her husband home at six just as she saw him off at twenty minutes to nine every morning.

"Mother's lying down, father," said Esther, taking her father's hat and coat. "She's not feeling very well, and father," she continued taking hold of his hand, "come in here, I want to speak to you," and she dragged him into the little room off the hall.

"What is it? What do you want?" asked Evan Evans, querulously, but not harshly. No one ever spoke harshly to Esther.

Esther closed the door.

"Father, dear," she said, putting both her hands on his shoulders. She was quite a little thing for all her eighteen years, scarcely taller than her mother. "Mother's very unhappy. We

are all very unhappy. So are you, dear, too. Evan has gone," and Esther buried her face in her father's breast.

The old man smoothed her hair but did not answer a word. They stood thus for several minutes. Then he gently attempted to put her on one side.

"I must go to your mother, child."

"Not yet, father, not yet," she said in a breaking voice. "Oh, do listen to me. You must promise me that you won't be——, I mean that you won't let the other boys go like that. Oh, father, it isn't right, indeed it isn't, and we are all so dreadfully unhappy."

"Esther, child," said Evan Evans, and his voice was none too steady, "no one can regret more than I do this unfortunate affair, but I have done my duty. I cannot have my conduct questioned like this."

"I don't question it, I only tell you, father dear, that you will lose all your sons if you treat them as you have treated Evan. I feel it, I know it, and what will mother do then," and Esther sobbed as if her heart would break.

"I must go to your mother," was all her father said, and he passed by her into the dining

room. There he found his wife in a faint on the sofa being administered to by the practical Miss Miriam.

"Hush!" she said shortly as he entered. "Evan's gone and Mother's bad; you can't talk to her now. You'd better leave her to me," and the old man went back to his sanctum, where he buried himself in a volume of Dr. Robertson's sermons till dinner time.

He and Miriam dined alone; the younger members of the family were relegated to a room in the basement next to the kitchen, where, as Uncle Bob said, they could "let off steam" to their heart's content.

"Mother isn't coming down and Esther's looking after her," explained Miriam, and they ate their meal in stony silence.

Miss Miriam always sat at the head of the table, and, as the boys said, generally took charge of everybody. A tall, handsome girl, with dark hair and gray eyes and an elegant figure. She took after her father and was consumed with an all-absorbing sense of duty, which rendered her obnoxious to many people, particularly her brothers.

Esther had her mother's sweetness of disposition, and though she could be firm as a rock on

certain occasions, she never "shoved it down your throat," as the boys elegantly expressed it. Consideration for others was Esther's maxim; duty—or her own view of it—regardless of consequence, was Miss Miriam's. Needless to say who made and kept the most friends.

CHAPTER III.

STHER, looking out of her mother's window, had seen Uncle Bob's welcome figure coming down the lane. "Mother," she said joyfully, "here's Uncle Bob. I knew he'd come. I'll run down and tell him to come and see you."

Mrs. Evans gave a sigh of relief. Bob shared all her troubles, and the mere fact of confiding in him seemed to relieve them of half their weight.

Esther flew down stairs as lightly as a bird out of doors the back way to meet her uncle.

"You dear old thing!" she whispered, "I'm so glad you've come. Is Evan with you? Isn't it dreadful? Has he found a ship yet? Oh, Uncle Bob, what are we going to do? Father's never asked after him; he told me I was never to mention the subject again. Just fancy! he doesn't even know he's gone to you."

"The deuce he doesn't! said the Captain. This was the first chance he had got to say a word, and he promptly took advantage of it.

"How's your mother?"

"Mother's lying down, dear," replied Esther. "and she wants to see you so badly."

"All right, chick," said Uncle Bob, "I'll come and see her. Meanwhile I'm going to have a yarn with your father."

"Oh, Uncle Bob, don't have a quarrel with father, whatever you do," pleaded Esther, pressing his arm.

"I said I was going to have a yarn with him," laughed Uncle Bob. "Does that necessarily mean quarrel, young woman?"

"Don't laugh, Uncle Bob; please don't laugh," said Esther; "it's much too serious. But you haven't told me yet if Evan's with you."

"Simply because you haven't given me a chance, my dear," replied the Captain. "Yes, Evan's with me, and what is more he's going to stay with me till I can arrange about a ship for him. Tell your mother not to worry. I'll come and see her soon. Off you go."

By this time they were at the front door. Esther slipped round to the back again, and Uncle Bob walked up the steps and heralded his arrival by the particular 30-ton knock with which he always announced himself.

Instantly there was a shout of "Uncle Bob!" and a stampede from the room in the basement, but all ardour was checked by Miss Miriam, who had gone to open the door herself.

"Go down stairs again directly, children. How dare you come upstairs making all this noise when you know mother is not well?"

"Uncle Bob," in a whisper, "you'll come and see us before we go to bed, won't you?"

"All right, chickens, all right; I'll come if I can." And comforted with this assurance they retreated underground.

"Well, how goes it?" asked Uncle Bob, kissing Miriam, as he divested himself of his old naval coat, which he always wore in the evening.

"Oh, I don't know," she answered wearily. "Father's enough to drive one wild. You'd better go in and see him. I must go and look after mother," and she ran up-stairs.

Uncle Bob went into the dining room. "Halloo, Evans," he said cheerily. "How goes it?" He always asked everybody how it went as if he were inquiring after the hall clock.

"Are you going to have a game?" asked his amiable brother-in-law.

"Well, I don't know," said the Captain, sitting down and making himself comfortable. "I rather thought of having a yarn."

"What about?" asked Evan Evans quickly.

"Oh, I don't know, anything, nothing. Why, is there any particular subject you are anxious to avoid?"

"Yes, there is," said his brother-in-law shortly, "I refuse to discuss the question of that boy with you."

The Captain had taken out a cigar. (He was the only one in the wide world who was privileged to smoke in the Evans' dining room, and that only after dinner. Evan Evans never smoked.)

The Captain struck a match and watched it burn with a critical eye.

"What (puff) boy (puff) do you (puff, puff) mean?" (puff, puff, puff.)

A smoker has a great advantage over a non-smoker in argument. Master Evan had once made the profound remark that Uncle Bob generally got the better of the Guv'nor in a jawing match because whenever he was driven into a corner he could draw on his cigar for ideas, whereas the Guv'nor couldn't.

"I mean Evan Evans," said the Guv'nor sternly.

"Oh," said the Captain, "and what might Master Evan have been up to now?"

"Up to," said the Guv'nor, "do you mean to tell me you haven't heard?"

"Heard what?" said the Captain through a cloud of smoke.

"That the boy had the audacity to declare this morning that he wouldn't go into my office."

"You don't mean it!" said the Captain, with a look of the blankest consternation. "Upon my soul! that beats anything I've ever heard; and what did you do? Kicked him out there and then, I suppose?"

"Certainly I did," said the Guv'nor, "I gave him a cheque for £30 and told him he could do what he liked with it, but I'd have nothing more to do with him."

The Captain leant back in his chair with his legs stretched out to their fullest capacity. He had his hands in his trousers pockets, and he alternately jingled a bunch of keys and a handful of change. Then he looked deliberately at his brother-in-law.

"You astonish me," he said. "You've acted as not one father in a thousand would have done. I can thoroughly understand your turning the boy out of doors, but I can't for the life of me comprehend why you gave him thirty pounds."

Now my readers may possibly perceive that Uncle Bob's remark partook of the nature of a "double intender;" but it presented itself to the Guv'nor in the light of a single interpretation, which he construed as favourable to his own action. We are all susceptible to the good opinion of our fellows, and it was highly satisfactory to the Guv'nor to find that he was receiving support from the quarter in which he had anticipated the greatest antagonism. He knew what value his wife placed on her brother's opinion, and he felt that with Uncle Bob on his side any slight difficulties of a conjugal nature which might arise would very speedily be smoothed over. The implied compliment to his generosity, too, was extremely grateful, for, as Bret Harte has remarked "we always wink with our weakest eye."

"Well, you see, Robert," he explained, "I couldn't let the boy go with absolutely nothing but his clothes."

"Why not? You're not going to tell me that you think the young rascal deserved it after refusing point blank to go into your office in that fashion, are you?" and the Captain's voice assumed an almost threatening tone.

"Certainly not," replied Evan Evans, "certainly not."

"Then why in the name of common sense did you do it? I tell you what it is, Evans, if that had been my boy, I'd no more have given him a cheque for thirty pounds than I'd have flown."

"Well, what would you have done?" asked Evan Evans.

The Guv'nor had him on toast, as Evan would have said, if he'd only known it. He drew vigorously on his cigar for an idea.

"What should I have done? Well, I'll tell you what I should have done. No, I won't. What's the good of saying hard things? I'm not a father, and I must naturally make allowance for a father's feelings. But by Jove! thirty pounds, my dear fellow, it's enormous. 'Pon my word, I should have said under the circumstances a fiver would have been ample. The boy didn't deserve, on your own showing, more than the proverbial shilling, and by the Lord Harry! you—you out-

Herod Herod, you gild refined gold; by jove, sir, hang me, if you don't paint the lily."

The Captain was occasionally strong in hyperbole, though he was not always apt. Evan Evans was delighted. Any qualms he may have had were being rapidly dissipated.

"Don't you see," continued the Captain earnestly, "that from your point of view, which is naturally the correct one—from your own standpoint, you have dealt with munificent, I might almost say extravagant, generosity by the boy: while from another—"

But here the Captain saw he was making a move too soon. He wanted further information, so he proceeded to elicit it,

"See now, my dear fellow, what in the name of thunder is that thankless young scapegrace going to do?"

"I don't know," answered his father, "and what is more, I don't care."

"Exactly" said the Captain, "and quite naturally you don't care, but I'm not thinking of you in this matter. What's the boy up to? what's he going to do? That's the point."

"His mother wrote me that he was going to British Columbia."

"To British Columbia!" said the captain, in a tone implying that that highly favoured country was situated somewhere between the fourth and fifth circles of Dante's Inferno. "My dear fellow, we must stop that at any price. Why, don't you know the P.M.G., your chief, has a brother in Victoria; he's one of the big pots out there—a merchant, I believe. I was stationed there myself in my last ship, and know everybody on the station. It'll never do for a son of yours and a nephew of mine to arrive out there like a vagabond."

"Why not?" asked Evan Evans, quoting the captain's query of a few minutes back.

"Why not!" repeated Uncle Bob. "Why, my dear sir, I can see the situation at a glance. The very first thing that young rascal would do would be to call on the P.M.G.'s brother and tell him that you had kicked him out with only £30. He'd tell a pitiable story which would come back with any amount of embellishments to the P.O. and be told all over the place to your detriment."

"But," said the Guv'nor, who didn't relish this aspect of the question at all, for he stood in abject awe of the P.M.G., as is the nature of subordinates towards ministers of the crown;

"you said just now that you thought £30 was a great deal too much."

"So it is, so it is," said the Captain, "from one point of view, but, as I was going to say, not from another. I tell you, Evans, the whole thing's going to do you more harm than you think of. There's only one way out of it. Either stop payment of that cheque—he's not likely to have presented it yet—or, hang me! make it a hundred."

"A hundred!" said Evan Evans faintly.

"Yes, sir, a cool hundred. If I were in your place I know exactly what I should feel inclined to do. I should feel inclined to stop payment and give the boy nothing—not one sixpence—but I'm not prepared to say it would be the wisest thing to do in your own interest."

"You see, it's this way," coutinued the Captain impressively, "a hundred pounds would enable the young idiot to get out there and present a more or less respectable figure, and thirty pounds wouldn't. If he were going anywhere else it wouldn't so much matter: but British Columbia—my dear sir, we are known there, we are known."

"But how am I to get hold of the boy?" queried the Guv'nor, who dreaded parting with the

money which would make a big hole in his nest egg only one degree less than the idea of unfavourable comment by the P.M,G. "I don't know where he is."

"Leave that to me," answered the Captain promptly. "I'll make it my business to find him. Who knows but what he mayn't turn up at my place this very night? I'll let him know what I think of him—I'll give him a piece of my mind," and the Captain positively blazed with righteous indignation.

"And you really advise me to do it?" asked Evan Evans.

The Captain knew his man well. He enveloped himself in a cloud of smoke, and then he said :

"If you ask my advice, I'd stop payment of that cheque to-morrow and give the boy nothing. Nothing—not a red cent to his name. That's all you consider he really deserves, and that's all he ought to get."

"Oh, I can't do that," said Evan Evans decisively. "I don't consider it would be right; besides, there's his mother to be thought of."

"Yes," said the Captain drily, "there is; very true; in that case I should make out the cheque for seventy and give it to me. I'll find the boy,

as I've told you, and what is more I'll see that he 'gets there,' as the saying goes in America."

Evan Evans went into his sanctum without another word and wrote out a cheque for seventy pounds.

"I've made it payable to your order," he said, and he gave it to his brother-in-law. The Captain took it and put it in his pocket book.

"Well," he said, "I think after all you've done the right thing; and now I'll just run up and say good-night to 'Liz.' I suppose this business has played old Harry with her."

"I suppose it has," said the Guv'nor absently. He was thinking of possible future communications from British Columbia.

But the Captain didn't wait for the reply. He flew upstairs four steps at a time and into his sister's room.

"Is that you, dear?" she said softly.

"All right, Liz; don't be miserable. I'll look after the boy; he's at my place—only you needn't know it. Screwed another seventy pounds out of the old man for him—that'll give him a better start, and I dare say I'll be able to manage something myself. Keep dark over this, however."

"How good you are," she murmured.

"Strikes me I'm what you might call an infernal liar if the truth were known—but never mind. Good-night. He shall come and see you to-morrow;" and Uncle Bob, with a hurried good-night to Miriam and Esther, who were waiting for him on the landing, was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

UNCLE Bob took all the arrangements of Evan's departure, including the purchase of the boy's "outfit," upon himself. The guv'nor's hundred pounds was like the widow's cruse in his hands. It wasted not nor failed. Every afternoon, Mrs. Evans, with a contingent from the rest of the family, walked over to the cottage before the guv'nor came home, *bien entendu*, to inspect the heterogeneous collection, ranging from pots and pans to boots and overalls, which Marshall, the one-armed, had picked up dirt cheap, as the captain expressed it, in the East End.

"Wonderful chap that, my dear Liz. He gets things for about a quarter the price you or I would pay for them. Look at that camp kettle now—7½d. I'm certain I could never have bought it for half-a-crown. Should have felt positively ashamed to pay less. These boots too. Capital pair of boots these, 15s. 6d. Lobb would have charged

you three guineas. What did you say, Miss Miriam? Bad shape. Nonsense. What does the boy want with well shaped boots at the gold diggings? But then you girls are all crazy about the shape of your boots. Evan, has your mother seen that second-hand gun which Marshall bought for—what was it, £6, £11? Upon my soul, I forget! Couldn't get a gun like that at Purdie's for £40."

Miss Miriam criticised everything, and Esther approved of all, while the boys looked on in envious wonder, and Mrs. Evans half forgot her grief at her son's departure in watching the proceedings and the intense interest which this wonderful outfit occasioned. Evan, of course, was as proud as a peacock.

The Captain would not hear of his going by sailing ship round the Horn, the usual route in those days.

"Nonsense, my dear Liz. Let the boy see something of the world on his way. What's the use of cooping him up for six months in an old tub of a sailer? 150 days out of sight of land is a terrible thing, I can tell you. I've been there. If he goes via New York and Panama, he's got twice the chance of picking up some wrinkles

that will be useful to him. He'd learn more in half a day from those infernally smart Yankees than he would in a month on board ship. Besides, he's sure to meet somebody who will be of use to him. Expense, did you say, Miss Miriam? Hang the expense. It only costs a few pounds more, anyway, and seeing how well Marshall has managed over the outfit, we can well afford it."

What the Captain really did with the hundred pounds no one ever knew. He refused to submit accounts to his sister, and the result of it all was that when everything was settled up, Master Evan had his passage paid to New York and seventy pounds clear in his pocket over and above his outfit, which latter, he had the satisfaction of knowing, was at least as good as his friend's, Fred Harrison, who had sailed just a month previously.

"The boy must have ready money in his pocket, my dear. Hard cash is the best friend a fellow can have in a new country."

Nobody knew what economies the captain practised to make up what he spent out of his own pocket, but it was noticed at the club that he carefully avoided the whist room for weeks afterwards, which caused much comment at the

time, as any divergence from established custom on the part of *habitues* will in, clubs. The Evans' household suffered too. The girls' monthly allowance was docked eighteenpence, and the boys' wardrobe knew not replenishment for many a long day. Not indeed, until a distant relative was obliging enough to die, and Mrs. Evans and the Captain each came in for a small legacy, which enabled each establishment to pursue the even tenor of its way on the old lines. The Guv'nor never alluded to Evan's departure, and whatever may have passed between him and his wife on the subject, the author of this story is not in a position to disclose for the reason that it never reached his ears.

Evan felt in tolerably good spirits, all things considered, though a seventeen-day steerage passage across the Atlantic in stormy weather was not then, any more than it is now, of a nature to promote hilarity. At first he was tempted to regret his decision and to wish himself anywhere, even in the Dead Letter Office, rather than in his insufferably close berth: but that was only at first, before he had got over his seasickness. The atmosphere was awful, and the food just one degree less foul. The steerage passengers mostly

consisted of Irish emigrants of the poorest class, who were going out to an Eldorado which existed only in their imagination. Evan's stomach revolted at everything. The Dead Letter Office was a paradise compared to his present surroundings, and he came to the conclusion, after the first day or two, that he had drunk the cup of misery and degradation to the dregs. But herein he was mistaken. There was nothing at all degrading in his position had he but known it, and his misery was due entirely to the fact that he had not yet mastered the grand secret that happiness, like everything else, is a purely relative matter, and is dependent upon the accommodation of self-interest to others. But few boys in their teens have acquired this valuable knowledge, which in the majority of cases is never acquired at all, and Evan was not of the number in possession of it. He was consumed with a sense of his own superiority over his fellow passengers, and of the fate which had condemned him, if only for a time, to such excessively uncongenial company. He concentrated all his energy on consideration of himself, and the subject was not, as a matter of fact, worth anything like the attention he bestowed upon it. He looked over the side of his bunk,

which made no pretension to privacy, and surveyed such of the steerage world as came within the compass of his vision with unmitigated contempt and disgust, and solemnly vowed that nothing should induce him to condescend to speak to one of its inhabitants.

One unfortunate individual came specially under his condemnation. A young fellow, his senior perhaps by two or three years, whom he had noticed on the day of embarkation. Evan had summed him up at once as a costermonger, and his appearance warranted the description.

But Jim Fink, despite certain drawbacks in looks and diction, was a god-send to the steerage. He was about the only one in the whole crowd of several hundreds who was not sea-sick. He had a bright smile and a kind word for everyone, and before twenty-four hours were over he knew everyone by name and was doing the work of fifty first-class stewards. Evan loathed the very sight of him, and when Jim asked "Well, maiety, 'ow are yer 'neow?" he nearly had a fit. He pretended not to hear him and turned over on his side with a groan. But Jim had passed on to help Mrs. Murphy wash and dress her five small children (for Murphy himself was in even a more

helpless condition than Evan) and did not at all notice the slight. On the fourth day Evan could stand confinement below deck no longer and reeled out of his bunk. Jim was at his side in a second.

"Lean on me, maitey, lean on me. I'll give yer a 'and with yer togs," and *nolens volens* Evan was under a big obligation to the coster from Whitechapel before he was through with his toilet.

Evan tacitly resented the interference but thanked him in a tone of voice which implied that the interview was at an end, but it wasn't.

There are people of the leech and limpet order, and Jim Fink was one of them. He hadn't the slightest intention of leaving Evan till he had steered him safely through the manifold dangers which beset all travellers vertiginous as to their upper, and unstable as to their lower extremities in the journey to the upper air. He had made the trip several scores of times that morning in charge of as many personally conducted parties, and therefore knew by painful experience, written in blue letters upon his shins, exactly where the principal obstacles lay, in the shape of iron saucepans and cases with sharp and penetrating

angles which contained the settlers' effects. The light in the steerage was dim though it was not precisely religious, and navigation was consequently a matter of extreme difficulty.

Evan made a bold bad start on his own account, and before he knew where he was he found himself, owing to an extra vicious lurch on the part of the ship, shot like a cannon ball into the middle of the Murphy family, who were regaling themselves with their mid-day meal.

Mr. Murphy used very strong language, which Evan under other circumstances would have as strongly resented, but there were ladies present, though they did not always behave as such, so he refrained. Jim Fink hauled him off a heap of little Murphys whom he had knocked down like nine-pins, though fortunately they were none of them hurt. Their father kept them in such constant and excellent training that they were as hard as nails.

"Steady, now steady does it," said Jim, "Durn your skin, why dontcher you do wot I tells yer?" and he half dragged half carried the boy on deck.

"Sit yer down 'ere," he said, "I'll get your blankets and make yer comfutable,' and he

darted down the hatchway to reappear in a moment or two with Evan's rug, with which he proceeded, as he said, "to make him comfutable."

Evan felt a perfect brute for his surliness, which he strove to overcome, and succeeded to the extent of being several degrees less impolite than he had been below decks. Not that Jim noticed the difference or even waited to be thanked; he was off again to convey other seasick sufferers to light and health, and thought not of himself at all.

Evan sat with his back against the bulwark, his rug around him, and drank deep draughts of fresh sea air with wonderful effect upon his temper. After all life wasn't so bad. Old Sol shone still with no less power and splendour than of yore; and the wild waves, though he did not in the least trouble himself as to what they were saying, were a glorious sight to see; and the gulls which circled round and round and seemed to go fastest when they moved least gave him plenty of amusement for and hour or more. He had brought up a book with him and after a bit tried to read, but very soon laid his head back and began to doze.

How long he lay like this he did not know, but he was promptly aroused to the consciousness of

being by the receipt of Mrs. Murphy and the children all over him at the same time. They had come up on deck at Jim's solicitation and returned his visit of the morning in an equally unceremonious way. It was all the ship's fault, as before, but as Evan felt ever so much better now than he did, he played the part of host with commendable politeness, and as soon as Jim had sorted them again said he was very glad to see them. His royal ancestry began to assert itself, and he emulated the example of the late Sir Walter by offering Mrs. Murphy his rug to recline if not to walk upon. Mrs. Murphy gratefully accepted the offer on behalf of her five children, and in ten minutes Evan found himself on the most familiar terms with a family to whom he had vowed that morning he would never condescend to speak. Such is the effect of fresh air and sunshine—marvellous mollifiers.

Evan suggested that Jim should go down and fetch a box of biscuits out of his bunk, for though almost himself again he did not feel quite up to encountering that dreadful atmosphere yet awhile. Jim was delighted at being asked to do anything by Evan for whom he had conceived a

great admiration as being the "only bloomin' toff in the 'ole crowd."

Huntley & Palmer have a world-wide reputation, but they were gods in the eyes of the little Murphys that day. When they had finished the box and asked for more, to the great distress of their mother, they all got up and essayed to walk about, which after a bit they managed fairly well. They all laughed heartily at their endeavours to walk as if they were not half seas over, and avoid collision with other denizens of the steerage who affected equal semblance of intoxication.

Great was the excitement when little Martha Murphy's sunbonnet blew off and they staggered in pursuit; but the wind lifted it high above their heads and jammed it tight against the rigging where its strings streamed defiantly in the breeze. Evan and Jim both raced for it but Jim was on the bulwarks first.

"Look out there!" roared a sailor from the bridge.

Jim made a frantic snatch at the sunbonnet; a scream went up from the Murphy family fit to waken the dead, and the next moment he was out of sight. He had lost his footing and fallen into the sea.

Evan, who was standing on the taffrail, hesitated in thought but not in action, for he had kicked off his shoes and thrown his coat and waistcoat on to the deck almost as soon as the sailor on the bridge had sung out "Man overboard!" and yet he hesitated.

No one knew it except himself, and he used to feel hot all over when he thought of it afterwards for many a long day. To the passengers, a wildly-excited group, half of whom had a confused idea that "Man overboard" was but a prelude to instant foundering of the ship, it looked as if the header he took was simultaneous with Jim's mishap, but Evan knew better. It was about fourteen feet from the top of the bulwarks to the surface of the Atlantic, and it certainly did not take him more than a second to cover the distance; yet during that space of time he thought a very great deal. He saw them all at Hampstead, he went through the last day at home and heard his mother say "You've been a good son to me all these years," to the accompaniment of the old retriever's tail beating upon the hard earth outside his kennel. And then he was breasting the waves—fortunately not too high—for all he was worth on the lookout for Jim. He heard the

first-class passengers call out "Bravo!" and he heard the splash made by a life buoy thrown from the ship. He was a good swimmer, though nothing out of the common, but fortunately he was level-headed. He divested himself of his shirt and trousers as quickly as he could, which was the best thing he could do, and then made for the buoy. Some one yelled:

"There, there—to your right," and he swam in the direction indicated, pushing the buoy in front of him, but he could see nothing of Jim Fisk.

Meanwhile the ship had been stopped, a very long way off as it seemed to Evan when he caught sight of her as he rose to the top of a wave. The water was very cold. He knew that they would lower a boat and did not feel a bit nervous about himself; but he began to be anxious at seeing nothing of Jim. Evan didn't even know whether he could swim, and wished now he had taken more accurate bearings before making the plunge.

"Confound the fellow," muttered Evan, "I wish to goodness he'd show up, it's getting beastly cold," and he raised himself on the buoy as far as he could.

This time he caught sight of something black on the crest of the next wave but one, and swam towards it. It was the unfortunate Jim, sure enough, but just as Evan got close to him he sank again.

"What a beastly nuisance," thought Evan, "I wonder whether the beggar's gone down twice already. No, hang it all, he hasn't had time," which was reassuring; and then he remembered he'd heard ghastly tales of sharks in mid-ocean, which tended to counteract his satisfaction.

I know I am losing a glorious opportunity, in fact the only one which may present itself during the whole course of my hero's adventures, of introducing a shark whose fin should glide like an aqueous meteor just above the water, and who should turn over on its side and disclose several dozen rows of gleaming black or white teeth at the proper moment: but I am not equal to the occasion; besides this is a true story, and veracity must ever be respected.

A few feeble and erratic bubbles heralded Jim Fink's return to the surface for the third and last time of asking, much to Evan's relief. He pushed the life buoy towards him, keeping warily at a

distance himself, for he had no wish to be collared in mid-ocean as if he were running with the ball, in accordance with the conventional practice of drowning men. But poor Jim was harmless of such nefarious design, as Evan very soon discovered. He was quite insensible and Evan had no difficulty in keeping him afloat till the boat arrived and they were both hauled on board. Evan's first question was to ask how long they had been in the water, for he would have given long odds on anything over half an hour, and when they told him eleven minutes he felt particulary small, though he kept his feelings to himself. They wrapped him in warm blankets and gave him brandy and water, which he greatly appreciated. In a very short time they were on board again, and a quarter of an hour afterwards Jim Fink was brought to, scarcely any the worse for his narrow escape.

CHAPTER V.

"LOR, wot a fool, wot a fool," were the first words he said when he had come fully to his senses and realized exactly what had happened. "Fancy me 'a losin' my balinse that wai. And it was the young toff as went in arter me, was it? I know'd he was a right 'un for all his 'orty wais," and Jim went off to sleep in the first mate's bunk, perfectly happy and contented with the day's doings.

Evan meanwhile had been carried off to the captain's quarters, whence he very shortly emerged clothed in a new frame of mind quite prepared to assume the position of *primus inter pares*, which he felt himself fully qualified to fill. When the skipper found, as he very soon did, that our hero was the real live nephew of a post captain in the navy (a passport to respectability only second in efficacy to being niece by marriage to a clergyman), he insisted on his continuing the voyage in the cabin as his guest. Evan demurred for some

time, as his pride rather revolted at the idea, and he winced at the thought of the saloon passengers knowing that he had been travelling steerage, which goes to prove that this scion of the Evans family, for all his royal descent, was not exempt from that touch of snobbishness with which we are all more or less imbued. The captain divined his thoughts with kindly intention.

"Look here, young fellow," he said; "I know what you're thinking about. Don't you worry. You shall just sleep up here in my deck stateroom and take your meals in the saloon with me. We are only four days out from land and there isn't a soul in the cabin who won't imagine you have been down on your back with seasickness all this time; as, for the matter of that, most of them have themselves. I'll just send and have your kit brought right up here." And so it came to pass that the steerage knew Evan no more; and the Murphy family, with whom he had been on such intimate terms at the biscuit social that very morning, passed completely out of his existence, to the extreme anguish of little Martha, aged eleven, whose susceptible heart had succumbed to Evan's charms in about five minutes. As for Jim Fink, he never thought of him again. The

coster's life had been worth saving at the risk of his own a few hours previously: but he was absolutely dead henceforth as far as Evan was concerned: for which difference in estimation our existing laws governing social distinctions fully account.

We exert ourselves mightily to prevent the gates of hell from closing upon a gutter-snipe, with inconsequent disregard of the fact that the conditions under which he has his being partake very largely of the infernal already; and we trouble ourselves not at all with the reflection that a life which is worth preserving might possibly be made worth living. But these are considerations which do not force themselves with any special degree of penetration upon boys of Evan's age, and if he thought about the matter at all it was merely to realize, with a certain tinge of bitterness, that his rapid promotion from steerage to saloon was due rather to Uncle Bob's position than to his own humane proclivities, which didn't seem to him to be altogether fair. Flattery, however, seasons many an unpalatable mouthful; and Evan lived on "taffy" for days. The hero worship of which he had been the subject at home during the short time preceding his departure was as mildest

milk and water compared to the libations poured out in his honour by the first-class passengers, especially the female portion thereof, who vied amongst themselves in their efforts to spoil the boy. That they did not entirely succeed was probably due to the fact that they were on board a steamer instead of a sailing vessel and didn't have time. There are few masculine fortresses of any age which can stand feminine onslaught entirely unimpaired; it is usually a question of time as to when they capitulate. Again, some women have a tendency to elevate male mortals to the status which has been aptly described as pertaining to that of "little tin gods on wheels;" and if (as they very frequently do) they should happen to find themselves ridden over rough-shod by the car of their spelter divinity they have, like the future Mrs. 'Enry 'Awkins in Chevalier's song, only got themselves to blame. Then they turn and rend their little tin god in remorseless and implacable fashion unknown to masculine minds.

They did not carry quite so many first-class passengers in those days as they do now, and a modest fifty comprised the total number of his companions.

Mrs. Mortimer E. Bing, a bright, vivacious little American woman, was queen of the saloon. She was under the captain's special care and sat at his right hand at table. Her husband was what is known in America as a "a prominent dry goods man." In the common or vulgar mother tongue this means "haberdasher," pure and simple, but Evan did not know this at the time. Like many young Englishmen of his class he included in his outfit ideas on the subject of trade, which, although they are amongst the few imports admitted under the protectionist tariff free of duty, might just as well be left on the other side of the Atlantic, seeing that neither Americans nor Canadians have "any use for them." Wherein, it may be remarked, they show their sound common sense—a marked characteristic of both countries.

At the outset of his acquaintance with Mrs. Mortimer Bing, the knowledge that her husband "kept a shop" might have seriously affected Evan's appreciation of the lady's charms and biassed his judgment in estimating her many and excellent qualities. It is perhaps just as well that we do not know too much about our chance travelling acquaintances, as we then have an

opportunity of viewing them in the light of their personality rather than of their occupation, which is always an advantage. I feel bound to remark, however, that when once Evan had fallen a victim to Mrs. Bing's powers of fascination it would not have mattered two straws to him whether her husband was a chimney sweep.

Mrs. Mortimer Bing was a revelation to Evan. When she came straight up to him in the simplest and most unaffected way in the world and, holding out her hand without any introduction, said, "Do you know, I think it was just lovely the way you jumped in after that young fellow," he was, as they say in the States, knocked "endways," and couldn't for the life of him think of anything to say beyond "that it didn't in the least matter," which made Mrs. Bing show her beautiful white teeth in a smile that completed his subjugation. She wasn't particularly good looking, but she was bright and womanly, and a good talker, "without a trace upon her face of diffidence or shyness." Moreover, she dressed to perfection, as what American woman with any pretension to breeding does not?

There were English ladies amongst the pas-s engers far prettier and more distinguished looking,

but though they may have been on the same ship they were certainly not in the same boat with her; and of this fact no one was more perfectly aware and gave less evidence than Mrs. Mortimer Bing. She had positively no one her right to dispute. The men all congregated round her on every possible occasion, much to the disgust of the honourable Mrs. Percival, who, with her three marriageable yet unmarriageable daughters was going out to join her husband, the English Minister at Washington.

Mrs. Percival had been overheard to allude to Mrs. Bing as "that American woman." Mrs. Bing retaliated by christening Mrs. Percival "the honourable sweet P." Despite however this interchange of compliment through third parties, neither ever knew that the other was there, though Mrs. Bing's ignorance on the subject was far more aggravatingly demonstrated than Mrs. Percival's. Mrs. Percival was of greater breadth of body than of mind, and the way Mrs. Bing would look through her at the sunset or a passing ship as if she in no sense impeded the view was as irritating to "the honourable sweet P." as it was amusing to the other passengers.

Mrs. Bing travelled with innumerable imped-

imenta, and amongst them, as she was playfully wont to remark, was a husband. But Mortimer E. (the second initial did not stand for any appellation; it had been adopted by Mr. Bing to distinguish him from another Mortimer of the same name and unfortunately in the same line of business) hardly deserved to be included in this category, for he troubled his wife little, if at all. He lived a secluded, innocuous existence in what served as the smoking room, an apartment bearing very slight relation to its magnificent successor in these days. Here he smoked strong tobacco and played poker for large stakes with half a dozen other Americans.

Evan was introduced to Mr. Bing as "the brave young Englishman who had jumped overboard to save a steerage passenger," which made him feel very uncomfortable, as did every allusion to his former quarters, but it produced no sort of effect on Mr. Bing. He asked Evan "what line he was in?" and Evan replied with the thoughtlessness of his years, "in the Cunard," which reply unduly impressed Mr. Bing with his smartness. He gave no sign at the time, but he told the story in the smoking room afterwards as a good joke, and in due course it got round to Mrs.

Bing, who congratulated Evan on "having got off something on her husband which was pretty good for an Englishman." He didn't in the least know to what she was alluding, but as he fortunately emulated Mr. Bing's example he managed to sustain his reputation.

"Why for an Englishman, Mrs. Bing?" he asked adroitly. His conversational powers had developed considerably during his short acquaintance with Mrs. Bing, who, like most American women, was an adept in the art.

"Well, I don't know," replied Mrs. Bing, "you Englishmen are pretty slow as a rule. I stayed in your country three weeks and I don't think I laughed more than twice the whole time, except when I happened on Americans."

Evan murmured an allusion to Punch, which fired Mrs. Bing with virtuous indignation. "Punch!" she said in tones of ineffable scorn, "and you people over there call that a funny paper. My dear child, you don't know what a funny paper is," and Evan, though he didn't quite like being called a child, confessed that he didn't. Later on, when he had occasion to make the acquaintance of New York comic literature, he discovered that there was a wide difference

between American and English humour and frequently got himself into terribly hot water by maintaining with British pertinacity that the advantage lay with the other side of the Atlantic. But this was afterwards, when experience had given him an insight into many matters besides the relative merits of the English and American press; so long, however, as he remained under the sway of Mrs. Bing's fascination he saw things from an entirely American point of view, which is but another example of feminine influence over masculine vision.

"The honourable sweet P." made several efforts to rescue Evan from the wiles of "that American woman." She felt sure, as she confided with marvellous perspicuity to another lady passenger, that the poor boy had a mother, and she felt it her duty to counteract as much as possible the baneful influence that was being exerted over him. The methods she adopted, however, were rather of a repellant than attractive nature, and Evan found it infinitely more agreeable to play shuffleboard or promenade the deck with Mrs. Bing and her satellites than to sit in the saloon and read Wordsworth to Mrs. Percival and her three unmarriageable daughters. He tried

the latter amusement once and only once.

"Couldn't manage it, eh?" said Mrs. Bing when he beat a retreat on the plea that he must have a breath of fresh air and joined her reception on deck. "Thought so; now come along right here. We are going to have a concert to-morrow night. What will you do—play, sing, recite? You Englishmen can always do something, I'll give you credit for that. We've got quite a programme already. I'm going to sing myself, and you'll have to ask the sweet P.'s what they'll do. All those girls can sing, at least their mother thinks they can. I know exactly the style of song, 'We are Wandering O'er the Mountains' for a duet, see if it isn't. Mr. Wetherby's going to give us a recitation."

Mr. Wetherby, a callow and uninteresting youth, fifteenth wrangler of the year, who was travelling for his health, entered a feeble protest on the score of incapacity, which Mrs. Bing refused to accept, and before lunch time her programme was complete. Evan promised to contribute "Villikins and His Dinah," and secured the services of the two elder sweet P.'s for a duet, as Mrs. Bing had anticipated, and the youngest, who advanced the same plea as Mr. Wetherby, was

instantly overruled by her mother and ordered to play a pianoforte solo on the nondescript wind instrument with an eighteen-inch key-board which graced the saloon. After lunch Mrs. Bing had an inspiration.

"Now, see here," she said to her attendant knights when they were all on deck again, "this thing's getting serious. This is an American concert because it's gotten up by an American woman, and it's got to be a success."

Evan had never heard the old English form of the past participle of the verb *to get* before, and for the moment it wounded his grammatical instincts, but they soon recovered.

"To-morrow," continued Mrs. Bing, "is my birthday; that's why we're going to have this concert. I never thought a bit about it till lunch time, but it is."

"Which birthday did you say?" queried a courtier slyly, and the court laughed.

"Don't be impertinent, child," retorted Mrs. Bing: "I didn't say which birthday—I said my birthday. Isn't that enough?"

The court *nem. con,* admitted that it was.

"Now, I want each of you to write me a Valentine."

"But it isn't February," objected another courtier.

"Don't be foolish," said Mrs. Bing. "What does it matter about the month? I've got an album and I'm going to have a prize competition and the best verses shall be read out at the concert."

"Must it be in verse?" asked Evan.

"Why, certainly it must be in verse; who ever heard of a Valentine in prose? I want to put you Englishmen's gallantry to the test; I'd like to have all the pretty things I know you're thinking about me put right down on paper, and then you'll see how foolish they look."

But Evan didn't hear this last remark. He had slipped away to his cabin on the bridge and was hard at work on his Valentine. Bing was a name which somehow did not seem to lend itself to poetry, but he meant, as he put it, to have a jolly good try. He was *distrait* at dinner time and feigned a headache next day. Half the court did the same and Mrs. Bing made many caustic remarks at their expense to the other half. Towards evening Evan's trouble was over and he presented Mrs. Bing with an envelope.

"I hope you'll like it," he said modestly,

"but it really was an awful grind. I never thought I should get through it."

Mrs. Bing read it and then she said with a genuine ring of pleasure in her voice:—

"That's just the sweetest thing I've seen for a long time. I guess Mortimer *will* be pleased."

This was Evan's Valentine:—

I asked my Muse to tune my lyre,
To kindle with poetic fire
My song. She answered me "Go sing
An ode to charming Mrs. Bing."

I asked the tall and stately ship
What made her roll so through the trip;
She said "I dance a highland fling
For joy to carry Mrs. Bing."

I asked the sea birds circling round
What keen attraction they had found
On board. They told me "On the wing
We catch a glimpse of Mrs. Bing."

I asked the wild winds if they knew
Whence they had come and why they blew;
They said "We have been sent to bring
Rose tinted health to Mrs. Bing."

I asked the white sea horses why
They raged and roared so furiously;
"We rage" they answered "sorrowing
To say Good-bye to Mrs. Bing."

I put my question to the air,
I called on space to tell me where
On earth I'd find the fairest thing;
And echo answered "Mrs. Bing."

The concert was a great success and Evan's verses were received with acclamation, possibly because they were the only ones sent in. Mr. Bing was delighted. He said to Evan:

"Young fellow, I guess you'll do. That was a pretty good thing you got off on my wife."

But the honourable sweet P. didn't like it at all. She qualified the whole proceeding as "scandalous" and wanted to know what "that American (meaning Mr. Bing) meant by allowing his wife to receive such ridiculous nonsense from a silly boy, in public too." "The honourable sweet P." regarded Mrs. Bing as an outrageous flirt and did not scruple to say so.

Herein she made a great mistake, for Mrs. Bing was nothing of the kind. She simply indulged to the full in that liberty which is accorded to her sex in the States: but she never abused it, and any man who acted on the assumption that she did would have fallen into as serious an error as Mrs. Percival. He would also probably have regretted it for the rest of his life. Mrs. Bing would not have drawn herself up to her full height, according to the conventional method, and alluded in tragic tones to "her husband," as if she had never until that moment

had cause to remember his existence. But she would none the less have found the means to administer a very severe moral castigation, which would probably have hurt the offender a great deal more than any corporal punishment at the hands of her husband.

Mrs. Percival and Mrs. Bing belonged to different worlds, obeyed different social laws, had nothing whatever in common, as Mrs. Percival, with the strongest possible emphasis, would have been the first to maintain: and "having a good time," which Mrs. Bing considered of paramount importance, was a term unknown in the vocabulary of Mrs. Percival. Mrs. Bing enjoyed every moment of her life and cared not who knew it, so ostentatious was she in the demonstration of her feelings.

Mrs. Percival on the other hand never lost an opportunity of protesting against existence on general principles and rarely gave outward sign of satisfaction save when engaged in dissecting the character of other women. Not an agreeable travelling companion by any means. Evan demurely remarked, to the huge delight of Mrs. Bing that no doubt the honourable sweet P. had been born into the world for some useful purpose

other than that of reminding the English minister at Washington that he was but mortal, and suggested her fellow passengers should wait upon her in a body with the object of enquiring what that purpose was. The Anglican standard of humour was rapidly being raised in the eyes of Mrs. Bing, thanks to the "good things," which, as she expressed it, Evan was constantly "getting off."

One of the passengers in the saloon was a testy old Scotch gentleman who was of almost as sour a disposition as Mrs. Percival and slightly deaf into the bargain. He sat opposite to Evan at table and in the immediate vicinity of Mrs. Bing on the one side, Mrs. Percival and her three daughters on the other.

He never took any part in the conversation save when a remark of a disparaging nature was levelled at the Cunard Company, when he instantly took fire and blazed up in its defence.

"Holds lots of stock," was Mrs. Bing's explanation, which may or may not be the right one. Needless to say that as soon as the old gentleman's weakness had been discovered, conversation frequently turned on the subject of the Cunard Company, of its villainous arrangements—which even in those days were excellent—and its total

disregard for the comfort of the passengers, with the most exasperating effect upon Mr. McPherson,—for that was the old gentleman's name—and to the great amusement of Mrs. Bing and her satellites.

On one occasion an American, who sat next to him at the table remarked on the "toughness of the mutton."

"Hey, what," said Mr. McPherson, "what did you say about the mutton? Vera good mutton, vera good mutton indeed. It only wants hanging."

"Don't you think," suggested Evan politely, "that that's what's the matter with the cook?"

"What did you say was the matter with the cook? Nothing infectious, I hope," replied Mr. McPherson, with his hand to his ear; and the satellites roared, much to the annoyance of Mrs. Percival, who couldn't for the life of her see what "those people" were laughing about.

Mrs. Percival had given up Evan as a bad job, a quite hopeless case. Her cross-examination of him regarding his sensations when, as she expressed it, he had been snatched from the jaws of a watery grave, had not been satisfactory. He had not come up to her expectations, indeed he

had wofully disappointed them.

According to Mrs. Percival he ought to have reviewed the whole of his past life in minutest detail in a sort of instantaneous photograph, with all his sins and iniquities prominently arranged in the fore-ground: and when Evan assured her that the sum total of his reminiscences during his passage from the bulwark to the sea comprised only the doings of a single day she felt personally aggrieved.

"But do you really mean to tell me, Mr. Evans, that during those awful and solemn moments when your life was swaying in the balance (metaphor was nothing to Mrs. Percival) that your sins never once occurred to you?"

"Not once," replied Evan.

"Surely, you must have known from your bringing up, which, judging from appearances would seem to have been of the right kind, that they ought to have occurred to you."

"I dare say they ought," answered Evan, "but I can only tell you that they didn't. I'm awfully sorry (politeness with ladies was always a strong point with Evan) but you see, Mrs. Percival," he added apologetically, "the water was jolly cold, and I was thinking more of Jim Fink than

anything else. I never could think of more than one thing at a time, could you?"

"Jim Fink! How interesting. Is that the man's name?" queried the second Miss Percival. "Did you know him before, Mr. Evans?"

But fortunately Evan was spared further interrogation, for someone else joined the group and gave him an opportunity of slipping away.

Of course he went and told Mrs. Bing all about it, and if the truth be told occasioned much merriment at the expense of the Percival family, which was manifestly unfair, for the honourable sweet P. meant well; though it is a remarkable and noteworthy fact that persons who are the most richly endowed with a praiseworthy desire for the moral regeneration of their fellows very frequently appear to be deficient in those faculties which are essential to the carrying out of their intentions. Evan when he began to talk to Mrs. Bing that afternoon as they paced the deck together had not the least intention of telling her anything beyond the conversation that had just taken place: but masculine reticence stands a poor chance against feminine curiosity, especially when the latter quality is evinced in the guise of sympathy by a bright and pretty woman.

The consequence was that in the course of an hour and a half Mrs. Bing knew a great deal more about Evan than he did himself, and managed to convey the impression that to travel steerage was so obviously the right thing to do under the circumstances that Evan felt rather proud of it than otherwise, wherein he but demonstrated the proposition that we are mainly guided in our estimates of our own actions by the opinions entertained of them by others.

Mrs. Bing wanted to go and pay a visit to the steerage. She longed to be introduced to the Murphy family and to make the acquaintance of Jim Fink, but this Evan would not hear of.

The idea of dainty little Mrs. Bing, whose frocks were positive poems and who looked the incarnation of neatness and prettiness, visiting the infernal regions of the steerage was more than Evan in his gallantry could stand. Mrs. Bing appealed to the captain, who happened to join them at this juncture, and intensely to Evan's relief he refused his permission.

"Ask me anything else, my dear lady, but not that. It's against the rules in the first place, and in the second I do not think you would enjoy your visit."

Possibly the captain was none too desirous of showing off the emigrant quarters of his ship to first-class passengers. He may have thought they would not appear to advantage and might bring discredit upon the great and glorious company whose privilege it was Mr. McPherson's to defend. But be this as it may Mrs. Bing was not allowed to have her wish, and she was therefore debarred the pleasure of becoming acquainted with the Murphys and Jim Fink.

Time passes quickly on an ocean steamer when the weather is fine and the companionship agreeable, and soon, far too soon as it seemed to Evan, they arrived in New York.

"Mind you come and see us. Come to-morrow evening," were Mrs. Bing's last words as they parted in the custom house; "you've got our address," and she was lost in a crowd of friends and relatives who had come to welcome her.

But Evan had not got her address for the simple reason that she had never given it to him. She had forgotten all about it and was really grieved when Evan did not put in an appearance after many days, for she had grown very fond of the boy and had looked forward to doing him many a kindness in her own home.

CHAPTER VI.

VAN went to an hotel down town and his first impulse was to kick the hotel clerk for impertinence, but he wisely refrained pending investigation as to whether the free and easy deportment of the gentleman was a characteristic of the individual or his class.

When he found that the bootblack evinced no greater respect for him than did the proprietor of the hotel, he came to the conclusion that the trouble was epidemic and gave up all thoughts of effecting a cure. Like most Englishmen who arrive for the first time in the States, he judged everything from a purely English point of view, approving all that conformed to the familiar type and condemning all that differed from it. So apt are we, and often wrongly, to imagine that what is ours is best.

A very short acquaintance, however, showed him that neither the hotel keeper, the hotel clerk nor the bootblack meant to give any offence.

"How's that?" may be a particularly irritating form of interrogation, but only at first; you get used to it as did Evan.

The first day or two of the week which was to elapse before his sailing for Panama passed pleasantly enough to Evan, who was much interested in all he saw, for there was much to interest a stranger in New York even at the time of my story. Five and thirty years have added almost as many stories to its principal buildings and increased its street area a hundred fold: but though the Four Hundred were not, and Central Park was away out in the country, the air of bustle and business pervaded it then even as it does now, and the fathers of the present generation had as little time on their hands as have their sons.

Evan was somewhat disappointed that so few people asked him "how he liked the country," or addressed him as "stranger," for he had been brought up with the idea that no American could possibly introduce a conversation in any other way. But with the exception of the query above alluded to, which after all was by no means universal, and a tendency to keep to the point which characterized everybody he talked with to

a greater extent than he was accustomed to in the old country, he failed to discover any reason for the absurd prejudice which was prevalent amongst Englishmen against Yankees in those days, and is to be met with occasionally even in these. If he had been asked his candid opinion he would have said that "they were not half bad chaps," which is superlative praise from the lips of a schoolboy.

Evan had not arrived at the conclusion, which is only to be attained by those who have had greater opportunity of forming an opinion than the average youth of nineteen, that there is no merit in nationality, *qua* nationality, and that a native of the American continent may be as good a specimen of the *genus homo* as even an inhabitant of our midland counties. I will not waver in my allegiance to my own country to the extent of asserting as a fact that he is, but I unhesitatingly claim as a premise that there is no particular reason why he should not be.

Evan would certainly not have made this concession; on the contrary he would probably have considered it incumbent upon him to maintain that he would rather have the vices of an Englishman than the virtues of any other

nationality, a contention which it has been my misfortune to hear put forward by persons of double the age and experience of my hero who have not yet qualified for a lunatic asylum.

It is remarkable that certain sentiments, which if uttered by an individual are condemned as personal conceit, have only to be multiplied by the million to be praised as national pride.

Evan wrote home volumes to his mother, telling her of his experiences on board ship and of his impressions of New York. He made as little as possible of the Jim Fink incident, but expatiated at length upon Mrs. Bing and "the honourable sweet P." Of his father he made no mention at all, though the rest of the family, including of course, Uncle Bob, were especially remembered. Evan Evans had ceased to exist for his son after the memorable day at home: and the old man, true to his word, never mentioned Evan's name. Like father, like son. Mrs. Bing's image had somewhat faded from Evan's mind in the novelty of the sights and sounds around him, but as he wrote about her to his mother, he felt overpowered by a desire to see her again, and wondered how on earth it was that he could have existed for three whole days

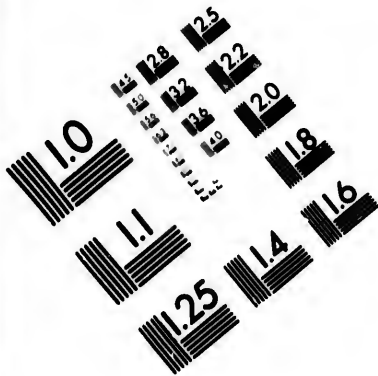
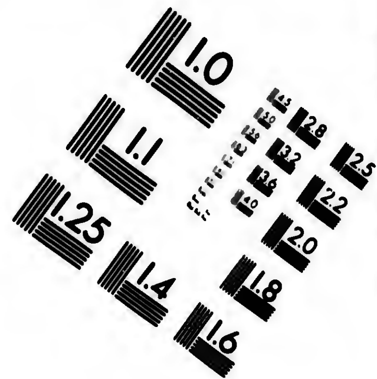
without thinking about her at all.

I sincerely trust that none of my readers have been labouring under the delusion that Evan was in love with Mrs. Bing. If any word or indication of mine has produced this impression I hasten unequivocally to remove it. Boys of Evan's age are never in love with anybody but themselves, and the number who change the object of their devotion on attaining maturer years is so small as to be hardly worth talking about.

A youth of nineteen falls, as the saying is, violently in love with a woman invariably five, occasionally ten years his senior. The greater the disparity in age the greater the violence of the attack: and the more hopeless the symptoms the more hopeful and speedy the recovery.

But unless my diagnosis of the case be an entirely erroneous one the complaint from which our young friend so acutely suffers has about as close an affinity with "the greatest thing in the world" as has a two-penny mirror with the noonday sun.

Volumes have been written about this "greatest thing," and we all of us know exactly how it looks upon paper: but the opportunity of proving it's existence to ourselves, let alone to other

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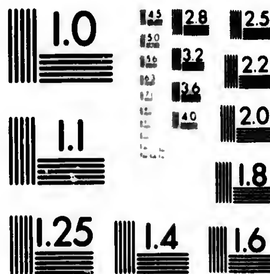
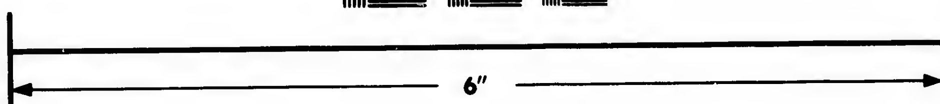

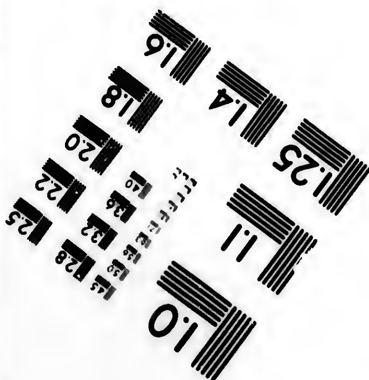
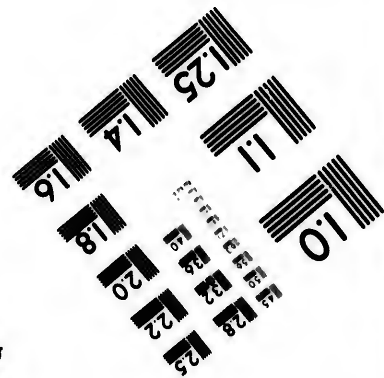

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people, in real life is availed of by remarkably few.

It may be engendered by words or looks, but it lives upon deeds alone. Deeds which great or small, but particularly small, are comprised under the one heading of self sacrifice. As a general rule it is kept upon starvation allowance and dies of inanition.

Now what does the average youth, or the average man for that matter, know of "the greatest thing in the world?" I trow nothing.

Master Evan knew as little on the subject as most of us, though far be it from me to maintain on that account that he was other than an agreeable person.

This disquisition for which, probably, I ought to apologise, is merely intended to show that whatever Evan's own views may have been upon the matter—and we have already seen that it was not ever present to his mind—there was really no serious cause for alarm.

The above notwithstanding, he decided that he would go that very afternoon and call upon Mrs. Bing.

Then he remembered that he hadn't got her address, which was exceedingly annoying.

He asked the hotel clerk "if he knew anyone of the name of Bing?" But the hotel clerk didn't, and "guessed he'd better look it up in the directory." This was a brilliant idea. There were numerous Bings, doctors, dentists, brokers, butchers and dry-goodsmen, but no Mortimer E.'s in the Directory, and Evan gave up his search in despair. Then he thought he would take a walk, at any rate he would get an appetite for dinner, and who knew what might turn up. It was about five o'clock when he started, and a lovely afternoon.

His steps led him all unconsciously in the direction of the river, and as he had not yet been across to Hoboken he thought he might as well go over and see what it was like. But he changed his mind suddenly, as boys of his age will, and thought he would go up to Albany by one of the Hudson River palace steamers of which he had heard glowing accounts from Uncle Bob. In fact this river trip was one of the very excursions Uncle Bob had told him to make, and he had been on the point of forgetting all about it. A tempting advertisement stared him in the face, saying that the steamer *Alabama* would leave that evening at 9 p.m. for Albany, calling at various

stations on the way up and returning next day. Fare for the round trip $13.50. What are $13.50 to nineteen years with seventy pounds in its pocket? Back to his hotel went Evan to pack up his "grip," though he called it "hand bag," for the night.

He hesitated for a moment as to what he should do with his money. First he thought of taking it with him: but on second thoughts, which are not always best, he decided to lock up the notes in his chest all save one for five pounds, which he calculated would be sufficient to cover his expenses for the twenty-fours hours during which he would be away. This was a foolish proceeding as the sequel will show. He ought to have given it in charge of the hotel clerk and taken a receipt for it, but Evan did not know of these things.

When he got on board he found plenty to amuse and interest him before the boat sailed. He was introduced for the first time to the essentially American game of poker, with its linguistic accompaniment, which was going on in the forecabin. He had never seen the game on baord the steamer coming out, for the *coterie* of Mortimer E. Bing and his friends had indulged in the noble pastime more or less *sub rosa*, as

gambling games were honoured in the breach rather than in the observance on Atlantic liners thirty-five years ago, and youngsters were not admitted. He didn't in the least understand the game, but he was intensely interested in watching the men who played it. Young as he was he was a close observer, and what struck him particularly was the intense keenness showed by the players as compared with the self control under good or bad luck, so easily mistaken for indifference, which as an Englishman he had been brought up to regard as quite the proper thing. But these Americans whom Evan was watching—average specimens of the low-class poker player—resembled children of nature in their complete heedlessness of restraint.

Evan had no conception of the power of his mother tongue until then. He had heard some choice expressions during his four days' steerage experience, and the terms of endearment applied by Mr. Murphy to his family had been quite a revelation at the time: but everyone of the half-dozen poker players, to say nothing of the bystanders surrounding the table, were as so many Webster's Unabridged to Mr. Murphy's limited vocabulary.

Poker is a fascinating game to watch, it is a still more fascinating as it is a more expensive game to play, and Evan breathed hard through an atmosphere full of strange oaths in the excitement of seeing the piles of dollars constantly change hands, till the appearance of four queens in one hand called forth such awful denunciations on royalty and its parentage as to leave him, a liege subject of Her Majesty, no recourse but to beat a hasty retreat.

He went downstairs into the saloon and partook of a glorious meal which made him feel ever so much better. Soft shell crabs and shad, did that wonderful state of New York produce nothing else worthy admiration, have a soothing and comforting effect upon foreigners : and Evan very soon under their influence forgot the shock his feelings had sustained in the forecabin.

Next to him there sat an old man with a typical American face, wearing the goatee beard, which was far more common in the States in those days than it is now. He had a genial kindly smile, with a bright eye, and Evan liked the looks of him. They very soon got into conversation.

Evan found that his companion was a farmer from one of the small towns on the Hudson, who

had come down to New York with a load of pigs, which he had disposed of on most advantageous terms, and was now returning home, jubilant and prosperous, with the proceeds of his deal. He had the money safe in the pockets of his fustian coat, $1,500 he said. He didn't believe in those down town banks, which went bust as often as not—not he, and he slapped his pockets with that complacency which cometh of possession.

He said his name was Butterchuck, Hiram D., and he asked Evan to come and stay at his farm, within a quarter of an hour of their acquaintance, an offer of hospitality so entirely unprecedented in Evan's experience as to leave him in doubt as to whether he ought to accept or refuse it, so he contented himself by murmuring that he was "very much obliged," which merely elicited the remark from the old farmer that "that was all right."

When they got on deck Mr. Butterchuck produced from one of his side pockets a chunk of tobacco from which he cut off a large piece and proceeded to chew it with infinite gusto, a proceeding for which Evan had no sympathy. The very idea made him feel sick, but then he knew no more then than the rest of us what the

future had in store, nor did he anticipate that the days might come when a "plug" would be his only solace and familiar friend. The veneer imparted by residence in a London suburb, however, still shone with a polished and steady glow all over him, and repelled affinity with any such vulgar an accomplishment as the chewing of tobacco.

Mr. Butterchuck asked him if he had "larned poker play." Evan said "No, he had only watched it once that afternoon, but that he thought it was a most interesting game." Mr. Butterchuck said it "was mighty interesting, that he rarely took a hand himself as he found it come heavy at times."

By this time they were in the forecabin, allured doubtless by the fatal fascination of the card table.

Your gambler, though he may not have a red cent to back a card with, is as surely to be found in the vicinity of the game as your actor, off duty, in the dress circle of the theatre.

Evan and Mr. Butterchuck would both have indignantly repudiated the insinuation that they were gamblers, but the term in the sense I use it is not necessarily one of reproach, and implies as

much mental condition in the man as active participation in the game, for the gambling instinct may be held so firmly with bit and bridle as to be under complete control: or again it may be lying dormant, and all unknown to its possessor awaiting an occasion to assert itself.

The card table was deserted, they found as they entered, the players having gone down to supper: so Mr. Butterchuck took advantage of the opportunity to initiate Evan into the relative value of the hands at what he called "poker play." Master Evan "caught on" with surprising alacrity, and in the half hour during which they had the room to themselves had mastered the principle of the game sufficiently to follow it intelligently. He suggested that they should play a hand together and produced five dollars with the air of a belted earl. Mr. Butterchuck smiled good-humouredly.

"No, young feller. Not much. Put up your money, I don't want it. Take my advice and play for chips for the next five years till you've larnt the game. 'Twouldn't be a square deal any way for me to play you."

"But I *have* learnt the game, Mr. Butterchuck," said Evan.

"Hev' you indeed!" answered the farmer, still more good-humouredly. "Then all I can tell you, young feller, is that if you've larnt poker play in half an hour you're a derned sight too smart for me to play with."

Further discussion was saved by a rush upstairs from the saloon of the poker players who had finished their supper. Evan and the farmer rose as they came in. They made straight for the table and looked closely at the boy and the old man. One of them said to Mr. Butterchuck:

"Take a hand?"

"Mebbe I will, mebbe I wont. See how I feel," was Mr. Butterchuck's reply.

His enquirer scanned him from top to toe none the less keenly that he had only one eye to scan with.

Evan recognized him as the man who had so strongly anathematised the four queens in somebody else's hand before supper, and owned to himself that his appearance was not prepossessing.

Four men sat down to play, and Mr. Butterchuck and Evan looked on, in company with perhaps a dozen others. The stakes were high and the money changed hands freely, but most of it went to the one-eyed

man. After a bit one of the four, who had lost perhaps fifty dollars, got up and said he'd had enough. At least that is what he meant, only he didn't express himself by any means in those terms.

"Chip in?" said the one-eyed man to Mr. Butterchuck.

"Don't mind if I do," replied that gentleman, and he took the empty seat.

Evan stood behind his friend, and the man who had just been playing stood beside him.

Mr. Butterchuck pulled out a leather bag from his side pocket and deposited it on the table. He took out a handful of five dollar gold pieces and counted out twenty which he placed in a pile in front of him.

The eye of the gentleman opposite blazed like a diamond.

Mr. Butterchuck deliberately tied up his bag again and consigned it to his side pocket. Then he passed over five dollars to the one-eyed man who changed it for him.

The game was a dollar ante with unlimited rise. Evan could see that his friend, as he now considered him, was being intently watched by the other players, and he knew by instinct that

they meant between them to have his money by fair means or foul.

He felt strangely uncomfortable. It was the one-eye's deal. Mr. Butterchuck held nothing whatever to draw to, but paid his two dollars to "come in," and drew five cards. He expressed his utter disgust, and the next deal had a pair of tens.

It cost him five dollars to play, but he paid his money like a man and added five more. He drew three cards whereat the one-eyed looked quickly up, not at Mr. Butterchuck but at the man behind him.

Mr. Butterchuck failed to improve his hand, but bet five dollars. The one-eyed, who had added a pair to his two kings by the draw, saw the five, but when the miserable ten spots were disclosed to view a look of ineffable content passed over his face.

The old man didn't know the first thing about poker, and the contents of the leather bag in that side pocket were the one-eyed's. This was very reassuring, and considerably simplified the labours of the confederate standing behind the farmer.

In the space of about three-quarters of an hour the leather bag was drawn upon no less than four

times, and Mr. Butterchuck was fully two hundred dollars out, after having convinced every one in the room that he was the merest tyro in the art of poker play.

"Derned old fool," muttered one of the onlookers, "he deserves to lose his money. Got as much idea of the game as one of his own roosters."

As for Evan he felt positively ashamed that he should have demeaned himself to the extent of even taking lessons from such an egregious old humbug, and inwardly "liked his cheek" for saying "he didn't want his, Evan's money." He longed to pull the old man out of his chair and take a hand himself, for he felt certain he could play a far better game.

Mr. Butterchuck was terribly despondent. He complained bitterly more than once of his bad luck, but stated he meant to play it out and win back, which was balm to the soul of the one-eyed.

It was Mr. Butterchuck's deal, the man on his left didn't play; the one-eyed bet a dollar, the man on his right covered it, and the farmer came in himself after glancing carelessly at his cards. The confederate saw them and telegraphed over,

three small cards, sevens, a six, and a queen. Very satisfactory indeed to the one-eyed, who held a full hand pat of knaves and aces. If he could only entice the old man on now there might be a small fortune in the pool. The one-eyed naturally drew no cards, which caused Mr. Butterchuck to express audible apprehension. The man on his right drew three cards and then threw up his hand, so that the game rested between the farmer and the one-eyed man.

Mr. Butterchuck dealt himself one card only in place of his queen, which he looked at. It was a small one and in no way strengthened his hand.

"Your bet," he said, politely.

The one-eyed silently pushed five dollars on to his orginal stake.

"I'll see you and raise you fifty dollars. You've only got two pairs, I know, an I'm not going to be bluffed. Stop a bit, though, dern my stupid skin, I've made a mistake. I ought to have taken two cards and I only took one. Guess you wouldn't mind if I were to take another!" and he moved his hand towards the pack.

"Stay that," roared the one-eyed, while the lookers on burst into a shout of laughter, "stay

that, you old fool. I guess you know the rules if you can't play the game worth a cuss. You bet fifty dollars. I'll see you, and dern me if I don't raise you ten. Perhaps you'd like to raise me."

"Raise on you—raise on you," replied Mr. Butterchuck, "of course I'll raise on you. I know you've only got two pairs and you're bluffing. I'll see you ten dollars and I'll raise you five hundred. I've got the money—put up yours, put up yours."

There was a hum of excitement round the table; the old man was evidently mad. Evan trembled all over. The leather bag was produced again and the stakes carefully laid out on the table. This was about the softest snap the one-eyed had come across for many a long day, and he was not the man to miss taking advantage of it.

"Put it up, put it up," said Mr. Butterchuck tremulously. "I've got lots more, don't you be afraid," and he slammed the other leather bag upon the table as an earnest of good faith.

The one-eyed had him now.

"You want to bet, you derned old fool, do you? Then here goes. I'll see your five hundred and I'll raise you a thousand, that is if you've got the dosh. Count it out."

"A thousand! a thousand!" screamed poor old Mr. Butterchuck, while Evan thought sadly of the proceeds of the pigs and what Mrs. Butterchuck would say.

Moses Primrose's deal in green spectacles was provident compared with the doings of this scatter-brained old fool.

"A thousand dollars! I've got it, count out your's. I'll see your thousand dollars," and he waited till the money was produced.

"Don't you want to bet any more?" sneered the one-eyed.

"I don't know yet, I don't know. Put the money in my hat in the middle of the table. I want to see how it looks. How much is it all together? Count it up. Let me see, three thousand and sixty-nine dollars. It's all mine, all mine," and the by-standers laughed at the poor fellow, who was so excited that he shook from head to foot.

"Not yet, old man, not yet," said one of the crowd soothingly. "Put it in his hat for the joke of the thing, and let him look at it." And the one-eyed didn't mind a bit, he knew he was safe, and could afford to humour the whim of a madman.

Mr. Butterchuck followed every movement as the money was put in his hat in the middle of the table, and then he suddenly stood up and said in a perfectly changed tone of voice :

"Well, I guess I'll quit poker playing this night any way. I ain't going to raise you. You can take the pot if it's yours. Show us your hand."

The one-eyed turned up his full house. A curious sensation passed through every one around the table, which was probably highly intensified in the case of the one-eyed when Mr. Butterchuck displayed his cards. They consisted of four sevens and a small card.

The one-eyed with a yell as of a hundred devils made a grab for the hat but Mr. Butterchuck was just a sixteenth of a second too quick for him. He'd jammed the soft felt wide-awake into his capacious side pocket in the twinkling of an eye.

"Sold, by God," yelled the one-eyed.

"That's what it is''' replied Mr. Butterchuck blandly. "That's just what it is. Guess I'll turn in now. Didn't know a seven looked just like a six when you hold your thumb over the centre spot, did you?" he said sweetly to the confederate. "Good night, young feller. Told you

poker play came heavy once in a while," and Mr. Butterchuck's tall ungainly figure swept triumphantly out of the cabin.

Uncle Bob was perfectly right. Evan had learned many things from those "infernal smart Yankees," and the lesson imparted by the poker play in the fore-cabin on board the steamer made a deep and lasting impression on him. Whether the game, from a purely ethical standpoint—seeing that to play it successfully calls mainly for the exercise of those qualities which we are accustomed to associate with that privileged class of public servants who are sent abroad to lie for the good of their country—is entitled to rank very high may be a question admitting of argument: but there can be no doubt that it affords an admirable and speedy insight into human nature which is not obtainable in the same length of time by any other means.

In after days Evan played many hands at poker and attained great proficiency in the art; but he always maintained that he never experienced anything like the same amount of excitement or interest as he did when watching old Mr. Butterchuck go one better than his opponent in the three thousand dollar deal.

He missed a very interesting and instructive display of linguistic fireworks on the part of the one-eyed and company in his hurry to follow Mr. Butterchuck and express his regret at his temporary disloyalty in doubting the old man's ability to play the game, but unfortunately his regret was never expressed for the simple reason that he couldn't find Mr. Butterchuck.

That gentleman had turned into his cabin before Evan could reach the lower deck and did not put in an appearance again. The poker party on his return upstairs had broken up, but the passengers were still talking over the game, and Evan gathered from the remarks he overheard though he took no part in the conversation, that the identity of his bucolic friend was seriously in dispute, opinion tending to the view that he was no other than a celebrated professional gambler known as Poker Pete, who went about the world in various disguises on the lookout for "soft snaps" in the card-playing line and was generally supposed to come out a very long way ahead at the end of the year.

Evan's interest in the old man was thereby enormously increased, and he felt personally aggrieved that he should be debarred the

opportunity of seeing him again: for he began to entertain grave doubts about Mr. Butterchuck's accounts of his transactions in pork (which Professor Huxley would unquestionably have classified under the heading of a pig story) though when he thought upon his own temerity in challenging his preceptor to a game in which he was evidently entitled to be considered an adept he more than forgave the farmer's duplicity.

He hoped that he might be up early enough to see Mr. Butterchuck next morning, but though he turned out at daybreak he saw no signs of him. He had evidently got off at one of the river stations in the night, and the question as to his identity on Evan's arrival at Albany still remained unsolved.

CHAPTER VII.

HE trip proved thoroughly enjoyable, though, saving only in the episode above recited, unevent-ful and Evan found that the Hudson river in point of beautiful scenery more than verified Uncle Bob's enthusiastic description. He returned to New York on the following day and as he landed on the pier who should accost him with a touch of the cap (betraying English origin) and a request to allow him to carry his bag but Jim Fink.

Evan was inclined at first to be haughty, but the look of genuine pleasure in the boy's face disarmed him.

"Why, Jim," he said, holding out his hand which the coster seized and wrung hard, "I'm very glad to see you. How are you getting on?"

Jim's face positively beamed. "Lor' bless your 'art, sir," he said, "oo'd a thought o' seeing yew? Give us your bag. Which way was yer going?"

Evan told him to the Porter house in Nassau Street—not five minutes walk from the wharf.

Jim stopped short.

"What's the matter?" said Evan.

"Wos you staying there?" asked Jim.

"Yes, I was," replied Evan. "Is there any reason why I should n't stay there?"

"Well," answered Jim slowly and reluctantly, "I don't know but what there is. The Porter House was burnt down last night."

It was Evan's turn to stop now. Visions of charred and blackened remains representing his outfit, the bundle of banknotes which he had left in his chest, all he had in the world in fact, floated before his eyes and made him feel extremely uncomfortable.

"No," he said faintly, "you don't mean it. How did it happen?"

"Dunno," said Jim, "I was there in the crowd about 'leven last night. Lor.' how it did blaize," and he entered into a garrulous description of the fire, of which Evan heard never a word. He was making at the rate of six miles an hour for Nassau Street, followed by Jim, who had some difficulty in keeping up with him, hampered as he was by Evan's bag.

In three minutes Evan's worst fears were confirmed. Four gutted walls, a few blackened beams and a vast heap of smouldering cinders were all that remained of what a few hours previously had been a handsome five-story building. The outfit was there and the bank notes too, somewhere in the heap: but outfits and bank notes, in common with other commodities, lose all value, save a chemical one, in carbonised form and Evan's heart sank within him. Jim watched his face narrowly and then with the intuition born of affection, guessed the nature of his loss.

"Is everything gone?" he said softly.

"Everything," replied Evan. "I expect you're better off than I am now, Jim. I've got three dollars in the world."

"Lor'" said Jim. "I ain't got three cents, but don't you mind; you come and stay along o' me. You remembers the Murphys. Mrs. Murphy'll be glad to see yer, and the old man: he ain't there; he's got a job out 'o town, he 'as, and I'm a lookin' after the family. Mrs. Murphy she takes in washin' she does."

Evan pictured the home of the Murphy family and the steerage accommodation shone by com-

parison, but it didn't occur to him to thank Jim for his offer.

"Look here," he said, "it's all very fine, but those beastly hotel people will have to pay up. They can't go burning my property like this without being reponsible."

Just then he caught sight of a man whom he recognized as the hotel clerk amongst the crowd looking on at the ruins. He immediately accosted him and stated his claim.

"Kept a chest with an outfit worth £150 and £60 in English notes up in your room, did you? Read the notice over the bell?"

Evan had to confess that he didn't think he had read it.

"Clause xi. Proprietors will not be responsible for damage or loss arising from any cause whatsoever to any property belonging to guests in this hotel unless such goods have been deposited in the office and checks obtained for same," quoted the clerk glibly. "Got any checks?"

Evan said "No."

"That let's us out," answered the hotel clerk, and he turned on his heel, leaving Evan boiling with indignation, but none the less overwhelmed by a sense of his own impotency to obtain redress.

Evan's face wore the same look as it had that morning at home when he had received his father's letter—hard and set. He turned and walked quickly away, Jim Fink walking close beside him with his bag. Evan was very angry indeed. He felt he had been badly used, and the injustice of the position rankled in his mind. He felt like going for somebody but he didn't know exactly whom, or how to set about it, and he therefore with delightful inconsequence vented his anger upon Jim Fink.

"Why the devil didn't you find out where I was staying before?" he said.

"Well," said Jim, "yer see it was like this. Me and Mrs. Murphy, we thought, leastways, that is, she did—"

"Oh bother Mrs. Murphy," said Evan, and Jim collapsed.

"Where is this beastly place we are going to?" he asked, tartly.

"What, Mrs. Murphy's?" said Jim.

"Yes," thundered Evan. "Mrs. Murphy's. I've nowhere else to go, have I?" and then without waiting for any reply he hurried on.

They came to a small iron building like a church close on to the street. The door being

open it occurred to Evan for no reason except the historical one put forward by the late Mr. Wemmick, to go into it.

He wanted to sit down quietly and think, and the idea of going into a church which he would have scouted a month before soothed him.

"Come in here," he said to Jim, and they both entered. A man wearing a black coat was walking up and down the aisle preaching or, as it seemed to Evan, rather talking to a group of men. His manner and voice were alike impressive and his hearers deeply interested. This is what he was saying.

"Wealth, after all, like everything else in this world, is merely a matter of comparison, and the terms such as "stoney broke," "hard up," etc. with a prefix, frequently of condemnatory nature, which we so constantly have occasion to hear, are purely relative in their significance. So long however, as the last dread contingency can be avoided, so long as the loss can be confined within the limits of the actual and partakes not of the nature of the prospective, or in other words so long as the tools of the ordinary workman which may be comprised under the heading of health and ability, be still left him wherewith to

work, he can afford to smile at slings and arrows, and set about the repair of his outraged fortune. He will, of course, swear, and lustily, that all is up with him, that he is a ruined man. He will compare his present condition with that of a fortnight ago, and relatively his contention is correct, but in reality it is nothing of the kind. All he really needs for the purpose of recuperation is to be left, as the scientists would say, in harmony with his environment, and he will infallibly end by adapting himself to his altered surroundings. This power of adaptability is amongst the most remarkable, as it is amongst the most valuable of human possessions. It is part of our common inheritance to a greater or lesser degree, and varies in extent very largely in proportion to age and temperament. The young are more richly endowed in this respect than the old: and sensitive, deep-feeling natures have but a meagre share as compared with those of less impressionable mind. "Time heals all wounds," is but an exemplification of the same truth. It means only that we get used to things, that new associations have been formed which have deadened, though God knows they can never hope to kill, the old ones: that fresh inter-

ests have been created, other ties formed, all tending to bring us into the field of action and lure us further from the realm of thought. It is the period of transition which to some of us is so exquisitely painful. The shorn lamb does not know, or at least does not realize, which is precisely the same thing, that the wind has been tempered for his special benefit. It blows none the less with cutting blast by reason of comparison with his former recollection of it: and it will blow all the more keenly the longer he reflects, as it is inevitable that he should, upon the comfortable coat which used to protect him against it. That lamb's business is to run about, to get warm, to do something, and that immediately. So it is with man and particularly with woman. Work is the tonic which Time the great healer prescribes in his cure. You will get well if you live long enough without it: but you will get well in a tenth of the time if you start by taking the medicine. Happy and pure associations will never be forgotten, will never cease to exist. They are as stars in the firmament of our lives, ever shining with clear and steady light, though it may be for the nonce obscured by the darkness of man's injustice. They induce

a peaceful, quiescent frame of mind conducive to mental and moral repose, a state which it should be our ambition to attain."

"But associations of a contrary nature produce totally different conditions; they are of their essence antagonistic to repose, implying a mental struggle for the supremacy of right and effort for the eradication of wrong."

"The advice so often given "Don't think about it," is nonsense, but it implies sound sense. It is but another way of saying "Think about something else," and the only way to think about something else is to take the first dose of Father Time's prescription and to do something else."

"Sound honest work induces sound honest thoughts, and *vica versa*: and, as we can't think two thoughts at the same time, so long as the mind remains in a sound condition there is little fear of its contamination by unhealthy reflections. Work, then, and work hard all unhappy ones, and if you can't under existing circumstances this wide world o'er get work, then work for all you are worth at getting it: and if you ever arrive at the honest conclusion that you can't get it, may God help you, for you're past the help of man."

"But don't arrive at this conclusion too soon.

Remember that this is not the worst so long as we can say this is the worst. Fight, rather, till you drop from exhaustion, or it may be starvation, and believe ever that there are other men besides yourselves in this world who are imbued with a love of right for the sake of right, and who are just as ready to help a fellow man in distress as any one of you is."

"There are business men amongst you I know and they will let me give them a thought or two to take away with them couched in the language of the counting house and ledger, which they will certainly understand and will therefore the more readily remember. A man's past is a blessing or a curse to him solely to the extent to which it influences his future: his evil deeds are notes drawn long ago to his own order of uncertain date, but which will inevitably mature. Unless he have in his portfolio good actions of equal value to set against them, his condition is that of a moral bankrupt, and his creditors, although they may be represented entirely by himself, will never be satisfied till he has made a settlement in full. Wrongs that may have been done him by others enter to no extent into this calculation. He does not take them into account. They partake of

the nature of bills drawn upon him without his consent, bearing neither his acceptance nor indorsement; of forgeries, of embezzlements, of theft, whereby he suffers temporary loss (for all loss is ephemeral) which can by no possibility deprive him of his own self respect nor inflict upon him the torture of remorse."

"Let no man dare to lose heart, still less to despair, so long as he does the right; and now God bless you all."

The man in the black coat disappeared through a side door and one by one the men who had been listening to him got up and went out, but Jim and Evan stayed on. Jim Fink leant over and whispered to Evan:

"Rum bloke, ain't 'e?"

"Shut up," answered Evan, angrily, and he moved into another seat.

Jim's cockney accent jarred terribly at this juncture.

The man in the black coat had made a great impression upon him. He had looked in earnest, very much in earnest, leaving his hearers in no doubt that he meant every word that he said.

Evan for possibly the first time in his life, had thought and thought seriously. He didn't

understand this man at all and now he came to look about him he didn't understand the building. He had entered it under the impression that he was coming into a church, but it gave no evidence, on investigation, of being a place of worship.

It was perfectly plain. At the far end were some tables and chairs. The walls were without decoration or adornment of any kind save a series of diagrams on the walls, as Sanscrit to Evan, inasmuch as they treated of subjects such as "land," "labour," "capital," "wealth" and a variety of terms which conveyed no definite ideas to his mind.

He had of course heard of them in a vague, indefinite sort of way: but he could not for the life of him understand what they meant in their present position.

He wanted to see the man in the black coat again and talk to him. He had not long to wait for in a very few minutes the man came out from an inner room.

There was nothing remarkable about his presence. Of medium height and spare figure, with rather a stooping gait and of any age between thirty and forty, you would have passed him in the street without notice.

A glance at his face, long, thin and clean shaven, would probably have arrested attention: and had his eye met your's you would certainly have wondered who he was. This is what Evan was wondering now.

The man, who evidently was intending to leave the building, stopped when he caught sight of Evan and Jim.

"Were you waiting to see me?" he said pleasantly to the former. "Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes, sir,—no—that is—" answered Evan, rather taken aback.

The man smiled.

"I shall be only too glad if I can be of service to you," he said. "You are a stranger in New York? Which way are you going?" and ne led the way into the street.

"May I walk with you?" Evan asked. "I think if you don't mind I would like to talk to you."

"Do, do," said the man. "Will your—" He hesitated a moment as he looked at Jim, who was standing, cap in hand, "companion come too?"

Evan had forgotten all about Jim in his im-

pulsive desire to talk to the man in the black coat.

"Jim," he said, imperiously, "you wait here. I want to talk to this gentleman."

A pained look passed over the face of the man in the black coat, which Evan noticed and knew was caused by the manner in which he had spoken to Jim. He wondered to himself why he should value this man's opinion, but he wished he hadn't spoken as he had.

"I live close here," said the man, "come into my rooms, our friend can wait for us there."

Evan seemed to have known him for ten years.

"Thank you very much, I should like to come," then he added in quite an altered voice to Jim: "Come along, I sha'n't be long," and Jim shouldered the bag with a grin, as if he duly appreciated the change in tone.

They walked about three blocks, talking of nothing in particular, and then with a latch key the man opened a street door and let them into a fair sized but unpretentious house, which had nothing externally to distinguish it from several hundreds of its fellows on either side the long unlovely street in which it stood.

Directly they were inside, however, Evan noticed that the furniture was different from that of any house into which he had been before. Rich Eastern hangings and carpets decorated the walls and covered the floor.

A magnificent bison's head confronted them on the stairs, surmounting a trophy of inlaid matchlock guns and daggers arranged artistically upon a shield.

"Will you wait here?" he said to Jim Fink, and Jim seated himself on a carved chair and stared in amazement at the beautiful things around him.

"Do come in," said the man in the black coat, "we can talk here undisturbed. Have a smoke?" and he pointed to a small table upon which stood cigars, cigarettes and a jar of tobacco.

Evan helped himself to a cigarette. The man threw himself on a divan in a corner, covered with cushions of the most exquisite embroidery and so low as to be hardly six inches from the floor. The room was a perfect museum of curios, evidently gathered in all parts of the world. The windows were of stained glass, casting soft, subdued hues of coloured light over everything in the room and enhancing the attractive yet

mysterious effect of the numerous pictures and embroideries which adorned the wall and the quaint images in silver, ivory and porcelain which met the eye at every turn. Evan thought he had never seen anything half so beautiful before.

He had keen artistic perception, though he had not the slightest idea he possessed the faculty. The sight of the lovely things around him was as the awakening of a new sense in which he positively revelled. It did not occur to him as being in the very least strange that he should find himself in his present quarters. He had evidently known his host for years somewhere, somehow; he already regarded him as an old friend, though their acquaintance was certainly not of an hour's duration, and it was perfectly natural that he should be paying him a visit.

The man in the black coat sat cross-legged like a Turk upon the divan with his eyes closed and his hands clasped behind his head.

When Evan had taken in the contents of the room, which took him quite a long time, and turned his gaze upon the divan in the corner, its occupant was so perfectly motionless that Evan thought he was asleep and did not speak for fear of waking him.

The boy fell into a reverie over the past, present and future, in which the man in the black coat seemed to be inexplicably mixed up. Who was he and what was the reason of the extraordinary influence he seemed to exercise?

Evan found that his eyes were riveted on the recumbent figure on the divan and he tried to move them once, to force himself to look his position in the face and realize that he had but three dollars in the world, with the immediate prospect of being received into the bosom of the Murphy family somewhere in the slums. But it was of no use. Do what he would he could not feel otherwise than perfectly comfortable and contented.

His prospects did not worry him in the least. He was thinking that perhaps it would be as well to spend his remaining dollars in telegraphing to Uncle Bob for a remittance when he was startled out of his life by the man in the black coat who suddenly clapped his hands.

"Heavens," thought Evan, "he's mad. What a terrible thing."

Heavy curtains at the end of the room parted, and a negro dressed in flowing garments appeared.

"My goodness," thought Evan, "Monte

Cristo (of whom he had read a month or two before in a wretched translation) isn't in it. What on earth is going to happen next?"

The negro carried a *Narghileh*, the famous water pipe of the East, in shape not unlike a large glass decanter with a very long neck, with magnificent jewelled amber mouthpiece almost as large as one's fist and a long flexible stem or tube, ten feet in length, of decorated leather wound round and round the pipe in graceful festoons.

He advanced slowly to the divan and placed the *Narghileh* upon a brass tray at the feet of the man in the black coat.

He then put the amber mouthpiece to his own lips and drew long whiffs through it till the water gurgled and gasped as if it were on the point of suffocation and the live charcoal embers laid upon the bowl of the pipe glowed to a white heat.

When the *tumbuki*, (a Persian substitute for tobacco,) was sufficiently kindled to be inhaled without effort, the negro rubbed the amber mouthpiece with a silken handkerchief and presented it to his master, after which he salaamed low and withdrew.

The man in the black coat smoked in silence for several minutes, apparently quite unconscious

of Evan, who was so intensely interested in the proceedings that it never occurred to him to consider that his host was treating him unceremoniously. On the contary the strange part of the whole thing was, as he reflected afterwards, that he didn't think it was strange at the time.

Evan came to the conclusion that he was in a dream and was saying to himself that he supposed he'd wake up soon, when the man in the black coat surprised him only one degree less than he had when he clapped his hands, by saying,

"No, I don't think I should do that if I were you."

Evan nearly jumped out of his seat.

He was prepared for a good deal from a man whom, as I have said, he felt he had known for a long time, but this certainly beat everything he had ever heard of.

Here was a man who preached sermons without uttering a word having resemblance to generally accepted ideas of religion—who lived in the New World amidst surroundings which were more in keeping with the confines of the Caspain than the shores of the Atlantic, who was waited upon by gorgeously attired negros bearing jewelled hookah pipes of exquisite workmanship and who crowned

his eccentricity by coolly replying to the unexpressed thoughts of other people

"I—I beg your pardon," said Evan at last, thinking possibly he hadn't heard aright—"did you say you wouldn't advise me to telegraph to Uncle Bob?"

"I said," answered the man in the black coat, "that I wouldn't advise you to do what you thought of doing, whatever it was, for I know from experience and on general principles that the decisions of young men are usually the better for not being acted upon. I'm not a magician," he continued, smiling, seeing the puzzled look upon Evan's face, "I'm an ordinary and, I fear, uninteresting person, only I have had a varied experience and have observed a great deal in my travels. Men of observation and experience often get credit for possessing faculties which they don't possess. You are surprised because I read your thoughts, but then you must remember under certain circumstances thoughts are not very difficult to read. You are a young fellow-countryman of mine, that is evident from your speech and appearance; in trouble, or you would not have listened to me to-day. You might have come in out of curiosity, but you would not have stayed

had you not been in want of advice. We don't want advice when things go well with us. We don't always take it when things go ill, but we feel the need of it. You have probably lost your money since you arrived in New York. Most young Englishmen do that from one cause or another. When you came in here you were struck with amazement at seeing things you had never seen before, and then your thoughts went back to yourself and what you should do: and you were divided in your own mind as to whether you should communicate with your friends at home or consult me. There's nothing very wonderful about it any more than there is about an ordinary conjuring trick—that is when you know how it's done. But we didn't come here to talk of me but of yourself. If I didn't ask you to tell me before it was only because I thought you would speak more freely after you had time to look around you and grow accustomed to your surroundings. Tell me anything you like, only remember that my advice will not be worth having unless you tell me everything. I would merely suggest before you begin that we hand your companion—'Jim' I think I heard you call him—over to the tender mercies of my servant. He can probably stand

what we call in this country a 'good square meal.' He looks as if he hadn't had one for a long time."

Evan had forgotten all about Jim waiting in the hall, and felt mean in consequence. However, he thanked his host on Jim's behalf.

The man in the black coat clapped his hands and the negro instantly reappeared from behind the curtains. He received certain instructions in language unknown to Evan, and salaaming again, withdrew.

"Now friend," said the man in the black coat, settling himself comfortably in his cushions on the divan, "tell me all about it. By the by, I ought to introduce myself. My name is Armitage. Go on."

Thus exhorted Evan poured out his story.

The man listened in silence save for an occasional "Ah!" and "Oh!" or a nod of the head.

The interest he took in what the boy said, and said well—for Evan was good at description—was manifested mainly by his eyes: but the eye is frequently more sympathetic than the tongue, and Evan knew that his hearer was interested in every word he said, though he couldn't for the life of him tell why.

He found himself for the first time in his life talking to some one who was a thoroughly sympathetic listener, and when we meet that *rara avis* whatever our condition or age, we are apt to take advantage of the situation.

He told Mr. Armitage all about his home life, of the troubles with the guv'nor, of his aspirations at school nipped in the bud by the latter's harsh decision, of his affection for Uncle Bob, of the last days at home, of his adventures on board ship; he even described his hesitation before he jumped overboard after Jim Fink (at which Mr. Armitage's eyes twinkled, and he remarked *soto voce* "good! excellent!" which was a comment Evan did not in the least understand). He told of the saloon passengers, of Mrs. Bing and his valentine. Mr. Armitage laughed outright at his description of the honourable sweet P. and the unmarriageable daughters, and thoroughly enjoyed the account of farmer Butterchuck on the Hudson river steamer. Evan concluded his tale with an animated description of his interview with the hotel clerk on the subject of the loss of his outfit and bank notes, which brought him to his introduction to Mr. Armitage in the building he had mistaken for a church.

"Go on," said his host from the divan.

"Well, the rest, sir, you know," said Evan.

"Indeed, I don't," answered Mr. Armitage. "Please go on. This is just as interesting to me as the beginning. I want to know what your feelings were in my chapel of ease. They may be of great use to me in my work. *On a souvent besoin d'n plus petit quo soi.*"

To report Evan's admissions to Mr. Armitage at full length would hardly be fair upon my hero, and would probably be of no special interest to my readers. Suffice it to say, that in obedience to the strange influence which this man had from the first appeared to exercise over him, he made as full and complete confession as ever penitent to Romish priest, and was conversing at the end of an hour and a half with his new found friend upon terms as closely allied to familiarity as the disparity in their ages would permit.

Mr. Armitage had made plenty of mental notes during Evan's recital, and had interrupted him with pertinent inquiry but once or twice during the whole time.

"So you want my advice," he said, when the boy had finished.

"Yes, sir, I do indeed," replied Evan.

"Have you read 'David Copperfield?'" asked Mr. Armitage, dreamily from his divan.

Evan wasn't astonished at the question. Since the appearance of the negro with the *narghileh* he had felt that astonishment was out of place, so he gave it up as a bad job.

He admitted that he had read "David Copperfield;" that it was one of his favourite books, and waited developments.

"Do you remember Aunt Trotwood and Mr. Dick?"

Evan distinctly remembered both.

"Do you remember the advice that Mr. Dick gave to Aunt Trotwood when she asked him what she should do with David?"

"Wash him," quoted Evan promptly.

"Pre-cise-ly," said Mr. Armitage, slowly.

Evan looked puzzled and hated himself for not seeing the allusion, but it went deeper than he thought, as was often the case with Mr. Armitage's remarks.

"The analogy doesn't strike you, eh?" said Mr. Armitage, "or, as we say in our terse and forcible vernacular, you don't 'catch on.'"

Evan admitted that he didn't 'catch on,' but

ventured to urge that he stood in no immediate need of physical ablution.

"Pre-cise-ly," replied Mr. Armitage, "not of physical ablution, my dear boy, but I allude to a moral stain of no very deep character I admit, but one which in my humble opinion, as you have asked me to advise you, should certainly be removed."

Evan looked more puzzled still.

"Now, let me put the case this way," continued Mr. Armitage, impressively, "you condemn your father's conduct towards you, don't you?"

Evan emphatically acquiesced.

"Pre-cise-ly. He acted with anything but paternal solicitude for your welfare in your opinion—turned you practically out of doors to get your own living, didn't he?"

Evan was very strong on this point.

"Pre-cise-ly. Told your mother that he'd have nothing more to do with you, thereby causing her, as I understand it, a great deal of pain?"

Evan rose up in arms at the mention of his mother. When he had calmed down Mr. Armitage went on in exactly the same judicial tone.

"Pre-cise-ly. And out of his exceedingly limited means gave you a hundred pounds wherewith to provide you with an outfit?"

Evan protested that his father was entitled to credit for only thirty pounds out of the amount and that the rest was due entirely to Uncle Bob.

"Be that as it may," continued Mr. Armitage, "he paid the money and that, from your account, must have been about as painful an operation as having a back tooth drawn."

"Two back teeth," asserted Evan with vehemence.

"Very well," said Mr. Armitage, "we'll make it two. We won't quarrel over so small a matter. My point is that your father is entitled to some credit. The question arises, how much are you entitled to?"

This aspect of the matter had not presented itself to Evan's mind. He didn't understand and he said so.

"Pre-cise-ly," said Mr. Armitage. "you don't understand, but I will endeavor to make my meaning clear to you. Whether your father has acted well or ill towards you is not a matter which concerns us at this juncture in the very least. We are interested, or, to speak more

correctly, I am interested, in your action towards him. Frankly now, I should like to hear upon what grounds you are prepared to defend it."

Evan begged for further elucidation. That any blame or censure could by any possibility attach to him in the matter had never for an instant occurred to him, and he owned as much.

"Pre–cise–ly," continued Mr. Armitage. "I gather that your parting with your father must have given your mother, not to mention the sister you are so fond of, exquisite pain; that they both deplored the strained relations existing between you and your father, yet you have given me no sort of indication that you made any effort to smooth matters or allay irritation. I fail to see evidence in your conduct of that consideration for others, albeit one of them was your mother, which personally I have always considered was the main characteristic of a gentleman."

Evan blazed. He was not in the least afraid of Mr. Armitage and he repudiated the base insinuation with fury.

"Pre–cise–ly," said Mr. Armitage with irritating and damnable iteration; "you are beginning to see my point. By the bye, you consider yourself a Christian, don't you?"

Evan, defiant still, snorted that he rather hoped he did.

"I'm glad you entertain such laudable aspirations," said Mr Armitage, "and I trust they may be realized; but you will permit me to observe that charity, the one special virtue which as a Christian it should be your particular privilege to exercise, is conspicuously absent both from your acts and intentions with regard to your father. Why, you are harbouring vengeful feelings even now. Remember, my dear boy," and Mr. Armitage bent forward and laid his hand impressively on Evan's arm, "that two wrongs never made a right yet, and I am inclined to think they never will. What do you say?"

Evan had nothing to say. This form of sermon was as novel an experience as the one he had listened to in the building his host had called his chapel of ease.

"Honestly now, is it any reason because your father acts harshly, uncharitably, unpaternally towards you that you should act harshly, uncharitably, unfilially towards him? You never even acknowledged receipt of the money, which, to say the least of it, was unbusiness-like—most unbusiness-like," repeated Mr. Armitage, with a

twinkle in his eye. "And now," he said, leaning back again, "it is your turn. We have heard the crown prosecutor; counsel for the defence, please."

Evan sat silent for a few minutes and then he said, sullenly :

"I suppose you mean that I ought to write to the guv'nor?"

"Pre-cise-ly," said Mr. Armitage, rising from the divan; "that occurs to me as being eminently the proper thing to do. You will find a writing table and the necessary materials to your left. Pray make yourself entirely at home."

"Oh, hang it all," said Evan, "what on earth am I to say?"

But Mr. Armitage had left the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

HERE was one special prerogative to which the little mother still clung with all the pertinacity of waning authority and that was the privilege of presiding at the breakfast table. In order, however, to preserve it from the aggressive onslaughts of Miss Miriam she was obliged to be down early in the morning. It was a daily race between them, but the little mother nearly always won, though whether on account of shorter orisons or less complicated *coiffure* this deponent presumeth not to say.

One morning about a month after the events described in the last chapter, the little mother, having got ahead of Miss Miriam by exactly two minutes, on entering the breakfast room gave a start of joyful surprise. On the table lay a letter addressed, in Evan's handwriting, to his father. She was guilty of an unpardonable breach of good manners. She actually took it up and looked at

it. Fortunately she was saved from further temptation, for underneath it lay one for her, the letter Evan had written in the hotel, for they had both come by the same mail.

Her first impluse was to rush to the foot of the stairs and call out "children, come quickly; there is a letter from Evan," but then she remembered that her husband was at home and she had perforce to stifle it, which was the fate of many an impulse in the Hampstead household.

Trembling all over with excitement she made tea, and then glancing at the clock saw that it was five minutes to eight. The guv'nor's cough as he came out of his room would not be heard till the clock struck, and she would at any rate have time to see if her boy was well. She glanced hurriedly through the letter, which she saw with delight was a long one, and then at the sound of the children running downstairs she thrust it quickly into her pocket as if afraid of being detected in a heinous crime.

They all came trooping in with the exception of Esther, a privileged person who was always allowed thirty seconds' grace without a growl from the guv'nor on the score of unpunctuality.

"Any letters, mother?" asked Miss Miriam.

"None for you, dear," replied her mother.

Miss Miriam glanced quickly at her mother. Mrs. Evans was a poor hand at dissimulation, and the tone of her voice was "a dead give away," as Evan, even after his then short sojourn in the States, would undoubtedly have remarked.

"Mother," she said sharply, "you've heard from Evan."

"From Evan," in chorus from the rest of the family. "Oh, mother, have you really heard from Evan? Hurrah." This from Arnold, who regarded his eldest brother in the light of a demi-god and the boy proceeded to execute a wild dance round the room.

He sank into his seat, however, as if he had been shot, and the babel of inquiries was instantly quelled at the sound of the clock striking eight. On the second stroke the handle of a door turned on the landing and Evan Evans' cough resounded through the house, a cough indicative of the man, hard, dry and self-assertive. The family instantly "dried up," and the boys looked prodigies of propriety.

Evan Evans entered to the tune of the last stroke, and had hardly taken his seat when there was a rush as of a miniature whirlwind down the

stairs and the room was filled with sunshine, for Esther had come in. She was the only one who indulged in what Evan had been wont to describe as the "kissing act."

"Father, it's not fair; you came out of your room just one second too soon, I thought I'd catch you before you got to the bottom of the stairs," she said kissing him. "Good morn——," but she stopped short, for her eyes fell on Evan's letter upon which the old man was gazing fixedly. She passed round to her mother and Mrs. Evans communicated her glad tidings in a look. Esther understood and felt happy. The meal was eaten in solemn silence, broken only by Miss Miriam's inquiry as to whether Arnold had brushed his teeth.

"Yes I did, Miss Miriam; so you're sold again," answered Arnold, emboldened by the fact of there being a letter from Evan.

"Then go upstairs and brush them again for your impertinence," snapped his amiable sister, "You're sure to forget them to-morrow, and I may not remember to ask you." And Arnold regretted his smartness.

Evan Evans looked several times at the letter lying beside his plate, but he said nothing; then

he took it up and put it into his pocket unopened. He spread out his newspaper and propped it up against the sugar basin according to custom and precedent, and read the continental news. They were all thinking of the last time Evan had had breakfast with them, and when the guv'nor said "Elizabeth, my dear, I think I'll have another cup of tea," the little mother's hand shook violently as she poured it out and Esther's eyes filled with tears.

As the guv'nor left the house they all crowded round their mother, and with "weeping and with laughter" was Evan's story told.

"Off you go now," said Miss Miriam to the boys, "you'll be late for school," long before the little mother had finished reading the letter.

"Oh, mother, need they go to school to-day as there is a letter from Evan," pleaded Janet; but Miss Miriam failed to see the force of this extenuating circumstance and whisked them off like a tornado.

On the way down the lane they met Uncle Bob who was on his road to the house, and told him the good news.

His thirty ton knock brought his sister, Janet and Esther to the door. Miss Miriam had already

descended to the lower regions and was busy hustling the cook.

"Well, how goes it?" asked the captain, cheery as usual. "So you've got news of that young scaramouch at last, have you?"

"How did you know that, sir," queried Esther.

"Well, seeing that the whole lot of you carry your hearts on your sleeves for daws to peck at, it wasn't a very difficult guess. Come, tell us all about it," and the precious letter was read all over again, the captain keeping up a running commentary the while, which kept them all in fits of laughter.

Miss Miriam came in in the middle, and for once forgot her household cares in the general good humour.

The little mother positively swelled with pride at the thought that her boy had actually jumped overboard in mid ocean to save a fellow being; as Uncle Bob said there was simply no holding her now.

"But," continued the captain, leaning back in his chair and chuckling mightily, "you will permit me to observe, my dears, for all your frills and furbelows, that you're simply not in it

as regards news. Yours is nothing to mine, which is several days later."

Mrs. Evans turned pale and looked at Miriam for support.

"What, have you heard from Evan, too, Uncle Bob?" asked Miriam, clasping her hands.

"No, I've not, madam; but I've heard from a vastly more interesting person than your scapegrace brother. The luck of that boy; he makes friends wherever he goes. Now just listen to this and tell me what you think of it," and Uncle Bob took a letter from his pocket.

"Hang me if that boy didn't tumble across an old shipmate and friend of mine. You've heard me speak of Ellerton? Oh, nonsense, of course you have. Well Ellerton's Armitage now, that is Lord Armitage (the expression of Miss Miriam's face was worth five thousand a year). Mad as a hatter, I'll allow, clever as paint for all that. Chokeful of fads. Thinks he's going to regenerate the world, and the Lord knows what. He's taken a fancy to that boy, Liz, and that's all about it. I'll tell you what it is, if he has, Master Evan's fortune is made."

"Oh, do let's hear what he says," and they all crowded round to hear the first letter from a

real live lord which had been received by the family since the days when they had hobnobbed with Cambrian kings.

Evan's mysterious host had not thought it necessary during their interview to tell him that he and his Uncle Bob were old friends. It interested him to hear the boy's story, and he enjoyed the charm of winning his confidence entirely unsolicited and uninfluenced; but the fact was, as the captain had said, they had known each other for long and had at one time been shipmates, for Ellerton had been in the navy and had retired as lieutenant on coming into a title and large property on the death of a cousin. He was now Baron Armitage, with a rent roll of many thousands a year, a couple of country seats, a house in town and the usual appendages of a landed lord. He had succeeded to the barony some six years before, and during all that time had spent about as many months in England. For one thing, he said he couldn't stand the climate; for another, his views were so extremely radical that his friends, charitably inclined, called him mad. He found the most terrible difficulty attending the start of his many and manifold schemes in his own country; and as he met with far greater

success, as he said, in America, he spent the greater part of his time there.

But Lord Armitage's letter must speak for itself.

"I rather like your nephew, my dear Rolston. He refreshes me. We met under circumstances which he doubtless will describe in due course to the "little mother" whom, to do him justice, he appears to hold in proper regard. At the present moment he is engaged in the somewhat uncongenial task (I fancy) of writing to his father. I really must make the acquaintance of the Evans' family as, from my guest's description, apart from their relation to you, they must be well worth knowing. I shall certainly call, with your permission, when I turn up in the old country—goodness knows when that will be, next month! next year! I shall, I suppose, find you, as usual, at the club at your old table. I'm doing rather well here. I've succeeded in establishing a reputation for eccentricity which, as I have often told you, is the only chance a man has of being judged by any other than the ordinary standard. I drop my title on this side of the Atlantic. I can't stand it—it bores me—and I am quite contented to pass as a "blarsted Britisher," just

one degree more "blarsted" than his fellows. I like the Yanks, you know; they interest me. I've several disciples, eighteen, I think it is, and my lectures and classes are getting popular and well attended by some of the greatest "toughs of the town." The parsons and I continue to be on the best possible terms. Curiously enough, I get on better with them than with most people, though, as you know, we haven't two ideas in common. How I ramble on about myself—just like me when you will want to know about your nephew. He thinks no end of you; far be it from me to undeceive him. Well, I'll keep an eye on him and his *protege*, Jim Fink, a terrible person from the slums, but I imagine, capable of great things, devoted to Evan. Tell your sister that she need not be alarmed about him during his stay in New York. I'll keep him out of harm's way and see him safely started on his journey west. I may go part of the way with him. I've had no change for eight months and a change would be enjoyable. Don't forget I'm simple Esquire when you write me."

Yours,

ARMITAGE.

Such a how-d'ye-do as followed the perusal of the above letter had seldom, if ever, occurred in the Evans family. The little mother was speechless and looked from Miriam to Esther. At last Miss Miriam said:

"Well I do hope Master Evan will behave himself properly and not disgrace the family now that he's got into respectable society."

"Pray don't make yourself the least bit uneasy on that score," said Uncle Bob from his arm chair.

Like everything else, the greatness which is thrust upon us has a tendency to adjust itself to its environment, and it consequently came to pass in the course of time that the Evans family grew accustomed to the sensation induced by vicarious acquaintance with a real live lord. Indeed, as the novelty wore off, Miss Miriam came to regard intimacy with the aristocracy as a matter of course. She carried her head several inches higher than of yore, and was even more than usually disagreeable to her brothers and sisters.

Her first act was to borrow a "peerage" and look up the recent acquisition, with the result that the whole neighbourhood was very soon introduced to "my brother's friend Lord

Armitage," and learned all about his large landed estates, his eccentricities (of genius), his philanthropy, and various other qualities which he was very far from possessing.

The curate of St. Bartholomew's, who met and worshipped Miss Miriam at tea fights, school feasts, penny readings and other parochial gatherings, cherished sentiments unbecoming a clergyman, or even a christian, towards "my brother's friend." He regarded him with the calf-like imbecility of a lover, whether layman or cleric, as a certain and formidable rival. It is only fair to state that Miss Miriam placed him in precisely the same category.

Feminine imagination, irrespective of age or condition, is boundless in its scope; and within half an hour of Miss Miriam becoming aware of the existence of Evan's eccentric acquaintance, she was occupying in her mind's eye that position in society as my Lady Armitage, which she felt herself eminently qualified to fill. She even went to the extent of picturing (for woman is cruel where her vanity is concerned) the feelings of her reverend admirer during the marriage ceremony at which, of course, he would figure as a broken-hearted "assistant."

Esther had much to bear at her hands, and the little mother's troubles were in no sense lessened, so that, speaking generally, it remained an open question whether the prospective advantages of a titled acquaintance were not more than counterbalanced by the unpleasant effects it immediately produced.

Uncle Bob was intensely amused. He considered it a duty to himself and to those around him to extract as much enjoyment as possible out of his daily life, and Miss Miriam's "airs and graces" afforded him infinite opportunities for chaff, such as his soul loved.

As for the guv'nor, he was grumpy to a degree after receipt of Evan's letter. He never told a soul, not even his wife, what was in it. But Mrs. Evans found out all the same. She was a woman, and married, as other women are, and her husband occasionally, though not often, carried his letters in his pockets as other men do. She kept her knowledge to herself, for it would have been the height of impropriety to disclose it, though, indeed, there was little to disclose; Master Evan's communication having merely expressed regret, albeit in graceful terms, at the circumstances under which he and his father had parted.

The fact was the guv'nor would infinitely rather that Evan had not written at all. He wouldn't have written himself, and he didn't understand why his son should have done so. The letter reopened a chapter which he considered closed, and he didn't want any sequel to the story, at the end of which he had written *finis* in large letters. It worried him a good deal, but what worried him more was overhearing allusions and scraps of conversation regarding Evan and Lord Armitage, in which he had no share. His curiosity on frequent occasions nearly, though never quite, got the better of his pride. He had vowed that he would not mention Evan's name again, and he stuck, as he was pleased to consider, manfully to his resolve.

Existence in the suburbs of London on restricted means, is not a whirl of ceaseless excitement; it partakes rather of the nature of the deadly dull; and anything out of the common, doubtless because it so rarely happens, is hailed as a God-send. People who live under the British flag abroad, frequently imagine that life in the old country must be far more enviable than it is in a new one, that there is so much more to be seen, so much more to be done, such far wider interests

and broader scope for enjoyment. They talk of the picture galleries and museums to be visited; of the churches, lectures and theatres to be attended; and the hundred and one pleasures from which they are debarred by residence in a place where such things as yet are not.

But they forget that the advantages after which they crave are of particular, rather than of general attainment, and are as much beyond the reach of the majority of the inhabitants of London as they are of the inhabitants of British Columbia. They forget also, that these things cost money; they are not given away with a pound of tea, or to be had merely for the asking. Even a visit to St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey, each of them a small education in itself, cannot be had free, *gratis* and for nothing. The city is a long way off from many of the suburbs: Westminster is further still and neither is to be reached save at the cost of a train or car fare.

Important considerations these to inhabitants of the suburbs, whose domestic budgets are very carefully compiled, so carefully in fact, that the supplementary estimates including expenditure under the heading of amusements, are not taken into account, for the simple reason that indul-

gence of this nature is not financially feasible.

If you have money, you can have a good time, even in the suburbs of London: but then again if you had money you probably would not live there. The whole question resolves itself into one of expense, and there is no doubt that people possessed of moderate incomes enjoy themselves far more in the new than in the old world. They are not tied and hampered to the same extent by custom and precedent. They do not consider themselves bound by the same hard and fast rules of conventionality. They enjoy far greater freedom in the gratification of their individual desires; and to speak truth they far more frequently abuse it.

This digression is excusable only as being indicative of the conditions under which the Evans family had their being and of the interest with which their prodigal's letters were looked forward to if only as a relief to monotony.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, Evan was having the best of all possible times. The story of the loss of the money and outfit was never written home, in obedience to a suggestion from Lord Armitage.

"How much do you suppose you lost

altogether by the fire?" he had asked.

"Well," replied Evan, "I don't know what the outfit cost exactly, but I suppose about £100. You see, Uncle Bob's man is a wonderful bargainer and gets things most awfully cheap."

Armitage smiled. He knew Uncle Bob, and could make a shrewd guess as to the proceedings of the one-armed.

"I think you'd better leave me to deal with the hotel people over the question of indemnity," he said. "I may be able to exercise some little influence in that direction. Let's see," and he took out his note-book, "what did you say? £65 in Bank of England notes, and personal effects valued at £100, total claimed £165. Now I think it probable that you may have to settle for so many cents on the dollar, as we say on this side. What would you feel disposed to accept? Suppose you give me absolute authority to settle the matter on your behalf and do the best I can for you?"

Evan was delighted: this was a way out of the difficulty which had not suggested itself to his mind, and he accepted it with alacrity.

"It's really awfully good of you," he said, "I don't know why you should do so much for me,

but somehow it seems all to come naturally."

"Well, you see," answered Armitage with a smile, "your Uncle Bob and I are old friends; that possibly makes a difference."

Evan opened his eyes wide in astonishment.

"You know Uncle Bob," he gasped. "Oh! why didn't you tell me before?"—and he seized Armitage's hand and nearly shook it off in his excitement.

This discovery made matters even smoother sailing than before between them, and went far to mitigate the shock which Evan experienced when he found that his host was not an ordinary mortal like himself; but the proportions of great men, even of title, shrink marvellously at close quarters, and the difference between the prince and the pauper is merely a matter of degree.

"Yes," said Armitage, "it is unfortunate, I admit, that I should be a peer of the realm, albeit of lowest rank, and should have more money than I know what to do with: but it can't be helped. I beg you will make every allowance possible in mitigation of the circumstances, which are entirely beyond my control. If you could conveniently continue to forget the fact in your intercourse with me, I should esteem it a favour."

Evan intimated his willingness to do all in his power in this direction, and during his stay with Lord Armitage it arranged itself comfortably in the background.

Armitage suggested that until matters were settled with regard to the indemnity to be received from the hotel, and he could proceed on his journey, Evan should make his home with him; an offer which the boy gratefully accepted. The only alternative—sojourn with the Murphy family in the slums—was not an inviting one.

"Now, I'll tell you what you had better do, as you have constituted me your agent in this business," said Lord Armitage, "give me a receipt in blank to the hotel people which will serve as a full discharge, and I'll fill it in for the exact amount agreed upon between me and them, and I can advance you what money you may require up to, shall we say, £150; that would leave us a margin of £15 for their rapacity. You see we must look at these things from a strictly business point of view." He added with a smile: "we always reduce everything to terms of a business proposition, eliminating sentiment entirely, on this side of the Atlantic, as you will learn from experience. Although, now I come to

think of it, I'm not so sure that the practice in vogue on the other side differs very materially in point of results. The main difference is that over there we don't talk quite so much about it."

Evan thought this an admirable suggestion and instantly agreed to it. He expressed his thanks in the warmest terms and intimated how everlastingly grateful they would all be at home to Lord Armitage for thus extricating him from an awkward dilemma.

"Well," continued his Lordship slowly, "that all depends whether they would or not. A matter of opinion I admit; but if I might be permitted to suggest, I think, in your place, I would not say anything about it. Silence occasionally is golden; and it seems to me that this is one of the occasions when the least said is the soonest mended. You see they would all be much distressed at the news of your mishap: although, owing to the business arrangement between us, you will not be a loser to the same extent as you might otherwise have been. We can hardly expect to get off on better terms than say ninety cents on the dollar, and from what you have told me of your father, I imagine that he might consider we should have got as much

as ninety-five. So, all things, considered, I really think I should make no allusion to the matter. Why cause trouble when you can avoid it?"

Evan quite thought the guv'nor would kick at the extra five cents. This argument proved a clincher; so he waived all opposition, and considered his host a wonderful man of business. Thus it was that the story of the loss of the money and outfit never came to be written home.

Lord Armitage had his own ideas about the wild and woolly West.

He had been to gold diggings in various countries, as he had been to most places worthy or unworthy a visit; and as an educator of men and morals he did not think much of them. He thought it a pity that a boy of Evan's temperament should go there, foreseeing that he would be infinitely more likely to come to harm than to good; and many were the discussions which the two had upon the subject. But he might as well have talked to the father as to the son. Evan's mind was made up on this point, pliable as he was on others. He had left home to go to the diggings, and go to the diggings he would, even if he had to beg his way across the continent on foot to get there.

Lord Armitage suggested as a compromise that he should postpone his departure for six months and act *ad interim* as his private secretary. He had long been on the look-out for a private secretary; his affairs really were in terrible disorder (a lamentable confession for a man who reduced everything to the terms of a business proposition), and he had come to the conclusion that Evan would suit him admirably.

But all to no purpose, the boy's ideas were set on nuggets of even larger dimensions than the one discovered by Fred Harrison's brother, and nothing that Armitage could say was of the slightest avail in altering his determination.

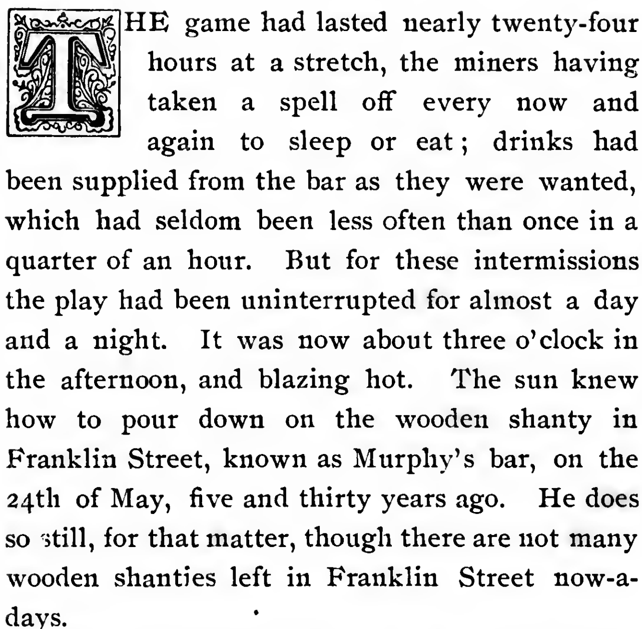
"Very well," said his host, "if you are determined to go to the devil in your own way, go you must. We shall doubtless meet *chez lui* later on if we fail to come across each other meanwhile. We will say no more on the subject."

In ten days' time, during which Evan grew really attached to his new friend and assimilated an enormous amount of useful information without knowing it, which is the only agreeable way of gaining knowledge, everything was ready for his departure, and the new outfit lost nothing in

point of completion under the experienced selection of Lord Armitage.

The latter did not go part of the way with him, as he had hinted in his letter to Uncle Bob that he might. He had a series of radical lectures on hand that could not be broken into, so that Evan started on the second portion of his journey from New York to Panama alone.

CHAPTER IX.



THE game had lasted nearly twenty-four hours at a stretch, the miners having taken a spell off every now and again to sleep or eat; drinks had been supplied from the bar as they were wanted, which had seldom been less often than once in a quarter of an hour. But for these intermissions the play had been uninterrupted for almost a day and a night. It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon, and blazing hot. The sun knew how to pour down on the wooden shanty in Franklin Street, known as Murphy's bar, on the 24th of May, five and thirty years ago. He does so still, for that matter, though there are not many wooden shanties left in Franklin Street now-a-days.

Murphy's bar was a celebrated resort for miners. It was cheap, and it was exceedingly nasty. It possessed no claims whatever to architectural

beauty or design, and the standard of comfort it aimed at was not very difficult of attainment.

Although called a bar, it partook of the nature of an hotel in that it afforded sleeping accommodation as well, for such as chose to avail themselves of it. No extra charge was made in the bill for occupation of the dozen bunks which were ranged along one side of the wall and lined with an evil-smelling compound which had once been straw. They boasted neither pillow nor coverlet, and would have invited slumber in no other condition save that of the last stages of intoxication. Each one, on this occasion, contained a red-shirted, shock-haired miner, his gummed boots in such close proximity to the head of his neighbour that the line of sleepers looked like an amorphous monster with a dozen heads growing between as many pair of feet. They were all sleeping off the effects of the bad whiskey which had been supplied to them by Mr. Murphy at the price of good champagne, and the whole building shook to the thunder of their snores.

Leaning up against the wall in sitting posture, or lying full length on the floor, were other miners, their heads at all possible angles, and their limbs in every conceivable direction, an even more

mixed up and utterly undistinguishable mass of humanity than their fellows in the bunks. Most of them had their mouths open and were snoring too, as if determined to swell the infernal chorus to the breaking point.

It were difficult to say who made the most noise, they or the card-players, for from the rough trestle table of deal boards in the centre of the room there arose ever and again a clamour which not only drowned the din of the sleepers, but caused the very bottles and glasses to enter a jingling protest at the language used, unfit as it was for publication, and a guarantee of the worst possible faith.

Leaning cross-armed over the bar, with a short clay pipe black as ink between his teeth, and a smile of ineffable content upon his face, was Mr. Murphy, the proprietor.

Trade was good, and he felt its beneficent influence pervading his entire being.

Daniel Murphy, may it please my readers, was the proprietor, changed in but few respects since we were introduced to him seven years ago in the steerage of the ship which had brought Evan Evans to America. He still used very bad language ; but everybody did the same, so that he

could lay no claim to peculiarity on that score. He made a great deal of money, for the profits of the bar were enormous; but he was always the same improvident Irishman he had always been, though he had long since abjured his allegiance to Her Majesty and become an American citizen.

Mrs. Murphy had still to take in washing to make both ends meet.

The family had migrated in due course to the Pacific slope allured by the gold fever, which attracted thousands from all parts of the world to California in those days.

They had tried the diggings and Murphy had struck it rich, after a time of terrible privation and hardship; and, yielding to the persuasion of his wife that he should at least invest part of his find in something, had run up a one-storied wooden building and started a bar, which soon gained an unenviable reputation, and became the headquarters of the wildest, most dissolute miners from the gold diggings.

The little Murphys were no longer diminutive. Seven years had made men and women of them. Children age apace in a country where everyone has to work, and work hard, for a living.

Martha Murphy was now a buxom young

woman of eighteen years, rather good looking than otherwise. She could have married any one of the frequenters of her father's bar she chose, and was probably only deterred from making a selection by the reflection that they were mostly very much married already.

Jim Fink had been faithful to the family all these years, staying with them through good and evil report (the latter largely predominating), and was now a devoted admirer of Martha's.

That young lady kept him on the string after the fashion of her sex, taking all the poor fellow had to give, as a matter of course, and feeding her vanity fat at the expense of his affection.

But the love of an honest man is the only gold mine which never peters out, and the claim which nature had assigned to Jim was simply inexhaustible.

General odd man about the place, he did everything and was responsible for all, getting wages as and when he could, which was certainly none too often.

Mrs. Murphy thought the world of Jim and looked upon it as a foregone conclusion that he should marry Martha.

It was principally upon the assurance of her

support that hope sprang eternal in his breast; for outwardly he received no greater encouragement from the young lady herself than was sufficient to make him hanker after more.

At this moment he was discussing matrimonial probabilities with his prospective mother-in-law in the back premises, when there was a roar as of a distant tornado, and Murphy's voice yelling for Jim sent him flying to the bar. He found, on entering, the whole room in a state of commotion.

About twenty fresh miners, all considerably the worse for drink, had come in, dragging with them a man whose red flannel shirt was torn half off his back and who had evidently been very roughly handled.

His hands were tied behind his back, and his arms were held tightly by a miner on either side of him. The crowd was hooting and yelling like a pack of demons, and it was some time before the cause of the commotion became apparent.

The new-comers were all acquaintances of those who were already in the saloon, and finally, in answer to queries of "what's up," a long gaunt individual, rather less drunk than the rest, who seemed to have some control over the gang, vouchsafed the following explanation:

"Boys," he said, "this here's a pretty serious business, and has got to be dealt with right here. This gord-durned Britisher is accused of having insulted the flag of the United States. He is further accused of having called it a dirty rag. That is the charge against him. I appeal to those gentlemen—"

Affirmative yells from the crowd, several of whom made threatening motions towards the prisoner.

"Question is, boys, what are you going to do about it? More'n that, 'pears that he's assaulted two American citizens in the execution of their duty in knocking the stuffing out of him for so doing; and question is, as I've already had the honour to inform you, what are you going to do about it?" and the speaker swayed to and fro with drunken gravity, bringing his heavy fist down upon the bar counter with a bang.

A regular hubbub followed this exposition of the prisoner's guilt, and the general concensus of opinion appeared to be in favour of taking him out there and then and lynching him, but the gaunt individual would not hear of any such proceeding.

"Boys," he said, "this thing is a serious matter;

but the prisoner at the bar (great applause), though he is only a Britisher, is entitled to a fair field and no favour. I propose therefore, with your permission, to try the prisoner at the bar (repeated applause) for the offence of which he is hereby charged, on the evidence which shall be submitted to this honourable court, and sentence him according. Gentlemen, it shall never be said that in this grand and glowrious country of ours, where freedom flows in every pore, and every man under the Constitution of the United States is just as good as any other man—yes sir, damme, I say better than any other man—let it never be said, I say, that any man shall ask for a fair field and no favour and not get it."

This burst of eloquence brought down the house, and the crowd unanimously approved the idea of a mock trial.

Steve Gruntler, the last speaker, was voted to the woolsack; the poker table was pushed against the wall and a chair placed on top of it.

A jury was impanelled, and in five minutes arrangements were completed for the trial of the prisoner on the heinous charge of having insulted the American flag.

Meanwhile Mr. Murphy and Jim held a whis-

pered conference behind the bar. Between them, as a rule, they could keep things within bounds, however uproarious the miners might become, and, as regards breakages, the proprietor was never under very serious apprehension, for the simple reason that everything of value capable of fracture had been broken long ago.

On this occasion, however, Mr. Murphy, with the unerring instinct common to barkeepers, scented danger ahead.

He did not know some of the miners who had come in with the prisoner at the bar, they were new chums, most of them, and he did not like their looks.

He thought it quite possible that they might, when they had a little more liquor inside them, carry their half-joking threats of lynch law into execution, and he had no idea of having a funeral on his hands if he could help it.

Forewarned, thought Mr. Murphy, is forearmed: so the consequence was that he gave certain instructions to Jim Fink, who was able to slip away unobserved by the crowd, busily engaged as it was in preparations for the trial.

To satisfy such legitimate curiosity as the reader may feel as to the object of his mission, it

may be stated that Jim was on his way to advise the Vigilance Committee that there were likely to be lively times at Murphy's bar.

Mr. Murphy, in common with many others in those turbulent times, felt safe in the hands of the Vigilance Committee.

Judge Gruntler sat in a chair on the poker table, the personification of drunken gravity; the jury took up their position on a couple of benches to the right of the court, and the rest of the crowd grouped themselves round anyhow and anywhere.

"Silence!" roared the judge, consigning each soul to perdition. For a moment everyone was quiet save certain of the snorers, who defied all attempts to rouse them to consciousness; and, to the great amusement of the crowd, only snored the louder when his honour threatened to commit them for contempt of court.

"Loose the prisoner's hands," continued the bench, in much the same tone as he might have said "Let loose the gorgonzola," and the prisoner's hands were unbound.

He was rather under than over medium height, with great breadth of chest, and the appearance of more than average strength. He had a well-

shaped head and a good eye, but his face showed signs of a hard and dissipated life—a man of strong will, to judge from the lines about his mouth and the square uncompromising shape of his jaw.

He looked as if he were quite capable of maintaining his opinion on any subject, including the American flag, regardless of consequences.

Not a single word had he spoken since they had brought him into the saloon, and he now folded his arms and surveyed the scene with a look of amused contempt, as if he were rather a spectator of than a participator in the proceedings.

"Where's the Bible?" asked the judge.

"Must have a Bible—can't get on without a Bible. Marshal of this court, dern your skin anyway, why don't you swear the prisoner? Swear everybody."

The order was taken literally amid roars of laughter. A counter volley of oaths from the court followed, for Steve Gruntler could give any man points and a beating in the matter of language, in any capacity, whether judicial or otherwise.

Finally order was restored and a volume of "Pendennis" produced by Mr. Murphy from

behind the bar as a substitute, that worthy getting a round of applause for his assertion that "he was sold out of Bibles, a miner having only that morning paid him fifty dollars for his last copy."

But "Pendennis," battered, dog's-eared as he was, served the purpose equally well, and was handed up to the judge.

"Prisoner at the bar," he said, tendering him the book, "the evidence you shall give this court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God."

The familiar sound of the judicial asseveration evoked a roar of laughter and vociferous cries of "Go it, Steve, pile it on; the old man's great, he is."

The prisoner at the bar speaking for the first time, said:—

"I am for the defence, your worship."

Then in the dead silence which followed this totally unexpected remark, he continued:—

"You will pardon me, your worship, for presuming even to venture to make a suggestion to this honourable court, but it occurs to me that it would be more in accordance with the judicial practice with which your worship is so evidently familiar, if you were to adhere to generally

accepted precedent, and, in the absence of any opening from counsel for the prosecution, to call the witnesses on the other side, previous to examining the prisoner at the bar, whose case, I may mention parenthetically, has been confided to me.''

The crowd was taken aback, for this was language to which they were totally unaccustomed.

They looked at each other, and they looked at the judge on the bench.

There was evidently going to be even more fun than they had bargained for.

The judge pulled himself together with an effort. His wits were not so altogether fuddled but that he had a shrewd suspicion, which he didn't like to admit, that the prisoner at the bar was poking fun at him.

Someone in the audience suggested that he should present the lower regions as a free gift to the prisoner.

The suggestion was couched in three monosyllables, short, sharp, and to the point, which is but further proof of the superiority of the mining vernacular as a time-saver over the more flowery and ornate forms of speech adopted in towns.

Moreover, it had the advantage of being thor-

oughly understood by the court. It is of no use talking over the head of your judge.

Steve Gruntler cast an approving eye on the gentleman who had made the suggestion, and told him that he might bet his everlasting life that that was just what he intended to do.

The crowd cheered this assurance to the echo. Old Steve was all right : he wasn't going to be "jumped" by any descendant of canine race who thought he could get ahead of him by "putting on frills."

But the counsel for the prisoner at the bar was not to be easily disconcerted either. He addressed the court again.

"I take it, then, your worship, that you will proceed in the ordinary way in this matter. Will my learned friend on the other side kindly open his case?"

The judge, in the strongest possible terms, asserted that there wasn't any learned friend on the other side.

"Then," continued the counsel for the prisoner, "I shall, with the permission of the court, call the witnesses for the prosecution and proceed to examine them. May I venture to enquire whom they are?

The court agreed to this proposition, and instantly several miners thrust themselves forward in eagerness to give evidence.

"One at a time, if you please," said the counsel for the prisoner at the bar. "Kindly swear this witness," and the witness to the infinite amusement of the crowd, was sworn by the judge upon the dog's-eared and tattered volume of Pendennis.

The gist of his story was as follows:—He in company with several others, had been at the bar of the Sampson House that afternoon, when the prisoner, whom he designated Mr.——Politeness, a stranger to everyone there, came in.

(The appellation of "Mr. —— Politeness" was exceedingly happy, and the crowd "caught on" in an instant. The prisoner was henceforward known as Mr. —— Politeness.)

The witness continuing said:—The prisoner was asked if he would have a drink, and he said, "yes, he would." Then he in turn stood everybody else drinks. Then he started to argify, as the witness expressed it, with him on the respective merits of monarchical and republican forms of government. The witness had maintained that the United States was the greatest nation on earth, and could knock the spots off the rest of

the universe (yells of approval); this the prisoner had contradicted (shouts of fury); then the prisoner had called the American flag a dirty rag, whereupon the witness and everybody else had gone for him, and that was all the witness knew about it.

Under cross-examination by the prisoner, he admitted that, prior to the insult offered by the latter to the American flag, he and others may possibly have cast reflections upon the parentage of royal personages in general and of the Queen of England in particular; but he did not consider they were of a nature to justify the insulting language used by the prisoner towards the American flag.

Half a dozen others followed, who all testified to the same effect, with possibly wider elaboration of detail and greater force of language.

Then the counsel for the prisoner, in a speech of vast eloquence and power, entered on his own defence. He admitted that the facts were substantially as had been stated by the witnesses for the prosecution; but contended that the provocation had been more than sufficient to excuse the language complained of, and which, in the heat of argument, had, he regretted to own, been

made use of by his client. He considered that, in view of the evidence submitted, the prosecution should be non-suited by his worship, and finally left his case unreservedly in the hands of the court and the jury.

The jury asked leave to consider their decision, at which the crowd cheered again, for though it was a foregone conclusion that a verdict of guilty would be returned, it thoroughly enjoyed full compliance with legal formalities. The jury adjourned to the bar to discuss the question, where they were joined by the judge, while the crowd talked it over in the other part of the room. In about fifteen minutes they re-entered the court, and the judge, whose potations during recess had been copious, had to be bodily hoisted on to the poker table.

"Gentlemen of the jury," asked his worship, "are you all agreed upon your verdict?"

"You bet we are," was the instant reply, whereat the crowd cheered to the echo.

"Do you find the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty of the crimes of which he has been charged, and which have this day been proved against him in this honourable court of justice?"

"Guilty!" roared the jury, "and we vote—"

"That's enough ; the rest is my business," said his worship interrupting, and fearful lest his prerogative of passing judgement was going to be interfered with.

The decision of the jury was received with a tremendous burst of applause in the court, and it was some minutes before the judge could obtain a hearing.

"Prisoner at the bar," he said finally, leaning back in his chair, and straightening himself up against the wall, "you have had the advantage of as fair a trial as could be offered a citizen of this great country, let alone a Britisher, and you have been found guilty by a jury of your own countrymen—(Murmurs of dissent from the crowd)—your own countrymen, by which I mean better men than your own country ever produced, or, what is more, can ever hope to produce. (Crowd nearly wild with enthusiam). You have been found guilty of insulting the flag, the glowrious flag of freedom, which waves over this land.

"Yes sir, and you have added insult to injury by owning up, which is just what might be expected of you. Gentlemen, the sentence of this honourable court is," and here—the audience on the tiptoe of expectation—his worship paused

with a blank and puzzled look upon his face: this oratorical effort had been too much for him, and he had clean forgotten the sentence he had previously arranged with the jury over their drinks at the bar.

"What is the durned sentence anyway?" he asked in audible whisper of the jury, and the crowd screamed with laughter.

But before any member of that august body could communicate with his worship, his failing memory reasserted itself, and he proclaimed "silence" in stentorian tones.

"As I was about to remark, the sentence of this honourable court is that the prisoner at the bar be condemned to pay a fine of one hundred dollars, to be expended in drinks on this honourable crowd, and, furthermore, that he gets upon this honourable platform and sings 'God——the Queen;' in default of which he shall be taken from this honourable court and planted up to his neck in the sands upon the shore of the Pacific ocean and there left to be devoured by the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, and all that in them is."

Having thus delivered himself of the greatest effort of his life, Mr. Steve Gruntler proceeded,

with the assistance of the jury, to vacate the woolsack, while the crowd simply shouted themselves hoarse with delight.

The sentence had all the charm of the unexpected and original, and it went down like free drinks—being acknowledged on all sides to be "the darndest thing Old Steve had ever gotten off."—"Where is he? hoist the beggar up,—— him, hoist him up," and in an instant the prisoner at the bar was landed, like a bale of goods, on to the poker table, whence he surveyed the crowd with much the same smile of good natured contempt which he had worn all through the proceedings.

"Hand over!"

"Pay up!"

"Where's the stuff?"

"Set them up there, Murphy, the Britisher's in for a hundred."

But his worship asserted his authority: "Boys" he said solemnly, "I guess I'm stakeholder in this deal," and the crowd instantly assented. "That's so, of course he is, hand over to Steve," and they waited impatiently for the payment of the fine.

The prisoner put his hand in his pocket and

pulled out a bag which everyone present recognized as the ordinary dust bag in use amongst the mining fraternity.

"Gentlemen," he said politely, "I have some reason to believe that there's more than a hundred dollars worth of stuff in this bag (hear, hear); and with regard to the fine which has been inflicted upon me by this honourable court, I wish merely to remark that I'll see everyone of you, judge and jury included, damned before I pay it."

There was a dead silence in the crowd, but it was the silence of astonishment. The prisoner at the bar, taking advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him, which he somehow felt was about the only one he was likely to get, began to sing in a clear, strong voice,

"God save our gracious Queen,
Long may—— ——"

Then there was a yell which woke even the drunken sleepers in the bunks along the wall; a dozen hands seized the prisoner at the bar; the crowd were simply furious.

Judge Steve saw at a glance that it was useless for him to interfere, so he let things take their course, and curled up on the floor for a snooze.

The prisoner's pockets were turned inside out,

though not before several of his assailants had cause to regret that they had laid hands on him.

He could fight as well as talk, and he did fight like a veritable demon, but he was very soon overpowered and gagged with a handkerchief, his hands and feet being securely tied.

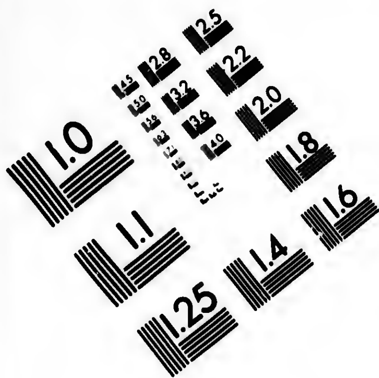
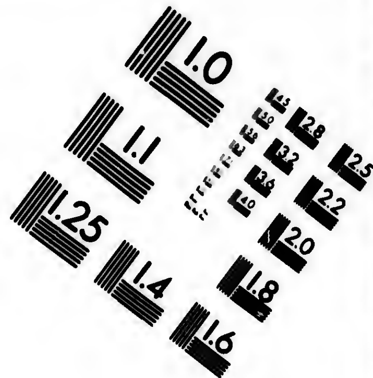
"Carry out the sentence of the court!"

"Take him down to the sea!" came in angry chorus from the crowd; luckily no one suggested lynching him, for in the temper they were in the probabilities are that the idea would instantly have been acted on.

The prisoner was hoisted on to the shoulders of half a dozen men and the whole conclave, save only those who were too drunk to walk, set off for the shore.

Mr. Murphy let them go without protest; it was no business of his; he was glad at their departing for he was afraid of them; but he had taken in over fifty dollars during the course of the proceedings, which was good business.

They had not left more than five minutes when Jim Fink arrived with a *posse* of vigilance committee men; and Mr. Murphy had only regrets to express that he had summoned them unnecessarily.

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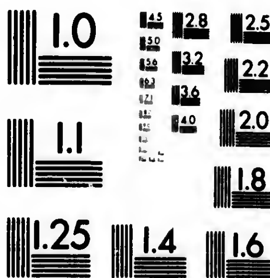

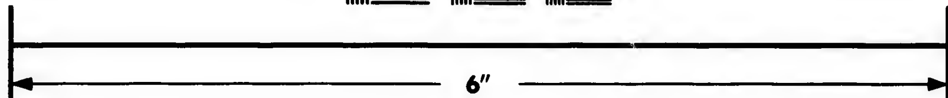

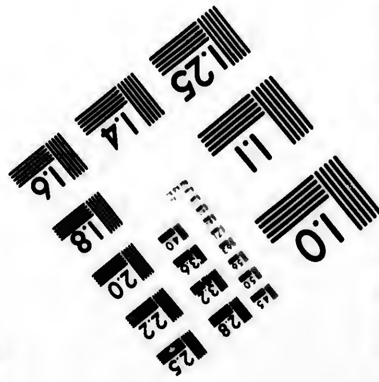

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The crowd had dispersed, he told them, at the mere mention of their name, which was very gratifying to the committee men, who went their way, rejoicing in the power of their reputation.

Jim Fink rearranged the tables and benches and resanded the floor, which ran streams of tobacco juice.

In the course of his operations he picked up a miner's chamois leather dust bag; he turned it inside out but it was empty, so he put it in his pocket, intending to hang is up in the bar pending inquiries.

Then, as it was his afternoon off, he proceeded to "clean himself" preparatory to taking Miss Murphy for a walk, in accordance with the weekly privilege accorded him by that young lady.

Meanwhile the prisoner at the bar was having quite the reverse of an agreeable time.

He still kicked and struggled for all he was worth, which wasn't much, for, tied as he was, his efforts at best were feeble, and the gag prevented his calling out.

His captors made for the sea, which was only about half a mile from Murphy's bar, by an unfrequented by-lane, as they had no wish to

meet the V. C.'s and be subjected to whys and wherefores.

Not a soul was in sight when they arrived at the shore; the tide was going out and in less than ten minutes a hole was scooped out deep enough to hold their prisoner in a standing position.

They planted him upright like a pole and filled in the sand—which a foot below the surface was cold as ice, but on the top was scorching hot—up to his neck.

When they had finished they surveyed their handiwork with grim glee.

The head in the sand—like Punch's Bishop in his new leggings—looked "supwemely ridiculuth," and it was with a certain sense of satisfaction that they guessed that "they'd got ahead of Mr. ——Politeness this trip, anyway."

They tried different hats on the head at different angles as if it were a block (it's own had been lost in the scuffle at the Sampson House early in the afternoon) and laughed like children at the comical effects produced.

They gibed at and taunted him in every possible way, and were particularly severe in their strictures upon the English royal family.

Finally one of the jurymen said :—

"Say boys, suppose we give the beggar a last chance? If he'll sing 'God——the Queen,' we'll let him out. Is it a go?"

It would have been a go but for the vigorous shaking of the head in the sand and an emphatic protest from it's gleaming eyes.

"Damned if he's beat yet. Well, let's hear what Mr.——Politeness has got to say before we go anyway," suggested one, and as this proposition sounded reasonable the gag was removed from his mouth, only to make way for the issue in a voice still defiant, though somewhat shaky, which was possibly excusable under the circumstances, of the detested strain—

"God save our gracious Qu—"

Then the voice stopped, the eyes closed and the head fell suddenly forward as if it had been shot; a miner in his exasperation had kicked it with all his force.

"My God, Hank you've broke his ——neck," said the juryman, "we'd better quit," and the now frightened crowd made for the town in different directions as fast as their legs could carry them.

And the sun shone down, unblinking, with pitiless unconcern; the seagulls, stolidly indifferent,

circled round and round overhead; while far off across the sands the breeze from the sea kissed the wavelets of the receding tide and surprised them into little rippling noises like the sound of a baby's laugh.

But the head in the sand cared no more than any of them. Concussion of the brain, combined with imminent risk of sunstroke, are conditions which do not lend themselves with any degree of animation to their immediate surroundings; and the head in the sand was availing itself to the full of the merciful provisions of unconsciousness.

CHAPTER X.

MILE or more away Jim Fink was making himself particularly agreeable to Miss Martha Murphy on their afternoon's walk, and his hopes rose high at the gracious reception his efforts received at the hands of that distinguished young lady.

"Paw," as she called Mr. Murphy, had been specially exasperating of late, and the attractions of home were not of such an alluring nature as to prevent Miss Martha from contemplating the prospect of leaving it with perfect complacency; and though she looked considerably higher in the social scale than any of her present admirers—Jim Fink included—for a permanent settlement in life, "she was open," as the advertisements say, "to an offer," from no matter what source. It amused her to have an admirer at her beck and call; it also flattered her vanity.

The exercise of power over man is a prerogative which woman, high or low, dearly loves to exercise; and the fact that she may have sworn to love, honour, and obey one particular member of the sex in no way interferes with her desire to subjugate others. It is an expensive taste and the bill is often paid in broken hearts and ruined lives; but these are after considerations, which in no sense trouble Madame at the time.

Miss Murphy, dressed in her best, enjoyed her afternoon walks with Jim.

She had known him so long, and he had given her such enduring proofs of his devotion that, far as he fell short of her ideal, she was perfectly willing to continue to receive his attentions and keep him on file for future reference.

Jim was in the seventieth heaven—men always are, whatever their social condition, when out for anti-matrimonial walks with their divinities.

They had been discussing "Paw" and his improvidence, and their talk led by easy stages to the occurrence in the bar that afternoon.

Jim had described all he had seen of the affair, and Miss Murphy had instantly taken a keen interest in the prisoner, who was evidently, from

what Jim said, of a different order and being to the usual frequenters of Murphy's bar.

Jim, putting his hand in his pocket, came across the miner's chamois leather bag which he had picked up and forgotten.

Together, as they strolled along the sands, they examined it—empty—save for a little gold dust; for some one had retained sufficient presence of mind, for all the excitement of the scuffle, to appropriate its contents: yet (and this was of far greater interest to Miss Murphy) it gave a clue to the identity of its owner.

A name, hardly legible, was written in ink on the outside, which they had some trouble to read.

Miss Murphy was the quicker of the two to arrive at a conclusion—women always are.

"Why, Lor' a mercy Jim, if it is'nt Evan Evans', as sure as fate!" and she snatched the bag from his hands.

"Evan Evans," said Jim slowly, for his mind travelled less rapidly than hers. "Get out, whatcher talking of? he went to British Columbia, he did. Haven't heard of him this many a day."

Martha had imperceptibly quickened her pace. The name conjured up the vision of the morning on board ship, when she had lost her heart at

eleven years old to the bright young Englishman who jumped overboard after Jim in pursuit of her bonnet, and had caused her such infinite pain by his subsequent defection in favour of the first-class passengers.

"Where is he now?" she asked impetuously, and Jim felt that a cloud had come over his sun, and a chill uncomfortable wind had begun to blow down the nape of his neck.

"I dunno?" said Jim. "Bless yer 'art, I never thought——"

"Course you never did," she replied tartly, "you never do;" and Jim tacitly admitted the fact.

She was walking quite fast by this time.

"Say Jim, what's that over there?" she suddenly said, excitedly, pointing to a black object in the sands about a hundred yards from them, round which the sea-gulls, now somewhat inquisitive, were still circling.

"I dunno," answered Jim in a tone which implied that he did not greatly care.

Miss Murphy began to run, and Jim could only follow with the consciousness that his afternoon walk was entirely spoilt on that occasion at least.

In another half minute, she was down on her knees beside the head. She took it tenderly in

both hands and cleared the matted hair from off the forehead.

She tried to open the closed eyes and gave a little scream when she found only the whites were visible, and that the head fell back in its former position, at an angle of forty-five degrees.

"It's him, it's him," she wailed.

"They have killed him, the brutes. Why didn't you stop them—you—"and, regardless of her frills and furbelows and her much prized three dollar kid gloves, she began to dig with her fingers in the sand as the badger burrows in the ground.

Jim Fink was on his knees too, for though he did not recognize in the tanned and bearded face any resemblance to the smooth faced boy of seven years ago, he knew intuitively that it was he, and the hopes which had soared so high that afternoon seemed for some unaccountable reason to have come tumbling down with a run.

He knew that Evan Evans was not dead; that he and Martha would together rescue him from his perilous position; that he would recover, and that Martha would fall in love with him, and—

All these things and more passed through Jim's mind in a flash, for great is our prescience where

our affections are concerned, whatever our status in life, and a great love sees as far as a keen intellect any day.

"Don't fret now, Mart," was all he said.

"He'll be all right, bless yer. I guess he's got a touch of the sun, that's what's the matter with him. We'll soon get him out of this"—and Jim shovelled up great arm-fulls of sand.

Very soon Martha stopped, but not from weariness. The sound of the sea had fallen on her ear. The tide was coming in and coming in fast.

Jim worked doggedly on.

"Jim," she said, and there was a great terror in her voice, "the tide is coming in, look at it!"

"Get along," replied Jim, "we've lots of time yet, I tell yer. Don't jaw, just dig for all yer blooming worth."

It was hard work, and it took time. When next Martha looked up the waves were scarcely a dozen yards away, and so far they had only got down as far as Evan's elbows.

"Pull him out, Jim, try to pull him out. Oh, my God, keep it back," and poor Martha all unconsciously offered up the first genuine prayer of her life.

Jim knew it was impossible to move him yet awhile, but to please her he tried.

He tugged and hauled with Martha's help, but he could not get a proper purchase, and the pressure of the sand, together with the dead weight of the body, was too much for them, so they fell to digging again—and the tide which waits for no man came remorselessly on.

They were well down to his waist now, and Martha gave another little scream.

The waves had wet her feet. She had shifted her position and was working with her back to the sea, so that she might keep her eyes off the incoming tide.

"It's all right, I tell yer," said Jim between his teeth, "a little water's just what we want to loosen the sand. We've got him now as safe as a house."—but Jim was beginning to feel nervous too. Martha's terror had communicated itself to him, for fright is terribly infectious.

He knew now that it was only a question of minutes, and though he did not doubt the ultimate result, he wished for her sake far more than his own that the suspense was over.

The wave which had wet Martha's feet was only a skirmisher in advance of the main body,

which had come forward, as it were, to reconnoitre and retired to report progress to the rest; so they got nearly half a minute's respite, and then it was followed by others, and the water swirled round the hole in the sand, wetting Jim Fink on the other side and drenching Martha all through.

"Now we can move him," said Jim, "you pull when I tell yer, and pull hard."

He stood with one foot on each side of the hole and seized Evan underneath the arms, swaying him from side to side.

Martha caught hold, too, and when Jim said "Now pull," she felt, as she tugged with all her might, a sense of satisfaction unutterable as the inert mass suddenly yielded to their efforts.

They both fell backwards into six inches of water with the body in their arms, and as they did so a wave, higher than any of the preceding ones, swept up and filled the hole.

They were only just in time.

In another five minutes they had their burden safe beyond high-water mark, and Martha, now the tension on her nerves was relaxed, womanlike, began to cry.

"Oh, Lordy," said Jim, to whom, as to most of

us, a woman's tears were an infliction too grievous to be borne, "don't you cry, Mart. See here now, you stay by him while I run and get some of the boys with a shutter, I'll be back in a jiffy." And Jim flew off, leaving Martha and Evan alone by the sad sea waves.

She unbound his feet and hands—the latter were as cold as stones—she put her hands on his heart and her own gave a great bound as she felt, or fancied she felt, that it still beat.

She laid his head upon her knee, put her arms about him, stooping down gradually till her cheek touched his.

Then she crooned to him gently, as a mother does to her babe, and it all seemed perfectly natural that she should hold him thus.

For a quarter of an hour, cold, drenched to the skin, with smart frock spoilt beyond hope of redemption—a circumstance which at any other time would have caused her unspeakable anguish—Martha enjoyed real happiness, such as she had never experienced in the whole of her life before; and the reason of this temporary beatitude was simply that she cared more about somebody else than she did about herself.

CHAPTER XI.

NE of the prettiest, yet withal the shallowest, frauds perpetrated upon a confiding public is the fiction of the little blindfold cherub who goes about with a bow and arrows, shooting, promiscuous-like, his darts into the bosom of man and maid.

He is called the God of Love—though anything less god-like or more loveless than his proceedings, as a general rule, it were impossible to imagine.

His puny shafts never penetrate further than skin deep ; they merely reach to that part of our anatomy containing our vanity, and tickle it with sensations, which for the nonce may be agreeable, but are rarely of lasting duration.

He is not, as a matter of fact, even on terms of bowing acquaintance with *bona fide* possessors of "the greatest thing in the world," who are

indeed worth knowing well for they are few and far between.

This pagan puppet has done duties for so long as a synonym for love, and formed the subject of so many a mile of sonnet and of song that in good sooth it were a thankless task to venture his right to dispute.

All the same I hold him to be a fraud, though in this respect, as in others, my views may be particular, rather than general. Still he has improved in his shooting of recent years, has Master Cupid; and in his nineteenth century guise, at any rate, he very seldom misses the gold.

It had doubtless been as well for Martha Murphy had she walked inland instead of seaward with Jim Fink on that July afternoon; but then the head in the sand, to say nothing of my story, would have come to an untimely end, which would have been exceedingly unsatisfactory.

When Jim Fink, in command of a rescue party, consisting of half a dozen of the "the boys," arrived upon the scene, he found Martha lying unconcious on the sand with Evan's head still resting on her knee. The excitement had been too much for her and she had fainted away. They

had brought a large plank with them as being the nearest substitute at hand for a shutter. As they moved Evan, Martha came to with a long-drawn, shivering sigh, and Jim felt momentarily happy again, poor fellow, when she looked up and recognized him.

"Go on, boys, run him up to the house; Mother Murphy's expecting of him," and Jim turned to Martha.

"I'm all right Jim," she said, "don't you mind about me, you go along of him."

Jim could scarcely believe his ears, so soft and gentle was her voice. Martha's tones were not of the duclet order as a rule; on the contrary they were strident, not to say imperious, and Jim's instinct told him the reason of the change; for all that he tenderly put his arm around her. Though she listlessly accepted his support, he felt that her heart was in the stretcher there with Evan; whereupon unseen hands reached out and seized him by the throat, nearly choking him—which is one of the exceedingly uncomfortable methods adopted by the fiend called Jealousy of making it's presence known.

Jim had told Mrs. Murphy what had happened, and her motherly heart had instantly gone out to

the boy who had lent her his rug and given her children the biscuits that day on the steamer seven years ago. Between them it was arranged that Evan should be put into Jim's apartment—a wooden lean-to at the back of Murphy's bar, where the lamps and coal-oil and such small deer were kept—not a very luxurious, and certainly not a cleanly apartment, but it was the only one available.

Mr. Murphy had kicked like Hades (in modified mining phrase) against the arrangement, for he had no wish, as has been before remarked, to have a funeral on his hands; but then he remembered that Evan had influential friends in New York, for Jim had told them all about Lord Armitage in the old days, and the wonders of his Orientally furnished abode ; so he had reluctantly given his consent that the sick man should be brought to his house.

He even went to the extent of expressing himself in strong terms to Steve Gruntler (who had woke up from his drunken snooze), and told him next time he wanted to play the blooming judge to choose a court house other than Murphy's bar for the exercise of his judicial talents. But this was mostly because the judge had given evi-

dence, in calling for further drinks, of his inability to pay for them, and Daniel Murphy loved cash customers even more dearly than an author loves his publishers.

Mrs. Murphy was waiting for them when they arrived by the back way, on Jim's suggestion put forward on Martha's behalf, in order that they might attract the least amount of attention.

She had tidied up things as well as she could in the lean-to, Mr. Murphy being too busy in the bar to offer any objection; and she knew, as long as business was brisk, and the dollars—or their equivalent in gold dust—were being taken in, that she would have no obstacle to overcome in that quarter.

Mr. Murphy was built very much on the lines of ordinary husbands, his deportment to his wife and family varying in perfect accord with the ebb and flow of affairs—bright as day when things are on the boom: black as night when things are on the slump. And they say that women know nothing about business. Nonsense! They can tell whether stocks are up or down, in whatever market their husbands may deal, ere these lords of creation have hung up their hats in the hall.

The reason, in my humble, though fixed

opinion, why women get credit for such wonderful powers of intution in the eyes of the sterner sex is mainly because husbands, in their careless indifference of woman's intellectual capacity, rarely take the trouble to explain any question in detail to their helpmates.

They content themselves—generally with a view of saving themselves trouble—with submitting the merest outline, the boniest skeleton of the problem which worries them, to the deity of the tea table, (they never, by any chance, submit a problem of which the solution is easy—why should they ?) and she, being keenly interested, arrives at conclusions far more rapidly than the autocrat of the breakfast table, simply because she has fewer data whereon to form an opinion. She has tried, sentenced and hanged a man long before the solicitor for the defence has begun to draw his brief; and the strange part of the performance is that her judgments are quite as often correct as those arrived at through the slow and tedious process of the law.

Kind reader, I am sensible that digressions of this nature are scarcely less wearisome, and I beg pardon. The irregularity shall not occur again.

CHAPTER XII.

VERY sick man was Evan; the doctor who attended him knew enough to know that, though the prominent members of the profession did not jostle each other for want of room on the Pacific slope forty years ago. He said it was a case requiring careful nursing, which is always a safe thing to say and shifts responsibility.

Careful nursing Evan got. No trained hands at Guy's or Bartholomew's ever worked more conscientiously or carried out instructions more faithfully than did Jim and Martha at the bunk-side of Evan Evans. Martha knew not the meaning of fatigue, and Jim's powers of endurance were only one degree less great, and all on account of this "greatest thing in the world," which makes men and women as giants on the earth.

Between them they pulled him through, though for six weeks it had been a toss up whether he would live or die. Finally the day came when he was able to sit up and take nourishment, and Martha's face as she sat by his side and fed him with a wooden spoon on beef tea, of her own manufacture, was radiant as the morning sun.

Poor Jim suffered tortures, but, like Viola, he never told his grief; and though his cheek hardly merited the appellation of damask, it none the less suffered the ravages of concealment. Martha did not notice—she had ears and eyes for only one person in the world, who was as a god to her, and her joy at his recovery simply filled up her existence.

The Murphy family, as a whole, had grown quite fond of the invalid during his illness, and even Mr. Murphy had vouchsafed to express occasional interest in his welfare, though whether this was in any sense attributable to the fact that he had received tangible assurance that his bill for board and lodging would be paid, is beyond the ken of this deponent.

Evan had been pronounced out of danger and was sufficiently himself again to sit up and

to develop an interest in life, which, in the case of convalescents, is usually demonstrated through the medium of an enormous appetite.

He was sitting wrapped up in one of Martha's shawls basking in the sun at the back of the house; and she was reading to him from the self-same dog's-eared and tattered copy of "Pendennis" which had done duty for the bible on the occasion of his trial.

Martha was not a good reader; her perusal was rather of the order of a literary steeplechase than anything else; she took long words as if they were hedges in her stride, and though she occasionally faltered at an extra nasty-looking jump, she never came to irretrievable grief. Evan, however, was in no critical frame of mind. Her voice was soft and low now-a-days, and it soothed him to listen to her.

Jim Fink suddenly appeared on the scene. Had he been the unfortunate possessor of an unrequited love in melodrama, he would have taken three steps forward, then stopped suddenly with one hand on his heart, the other on his brow, and scowled at the offending couple, who would, of course, have been totally unaware of his presence.

He would have raised his eyes to heaven in mute appeal and then, giving warning of his approach by an irritating cough, remark that it was an exceedingly fine afternoon. But Jim did nothing of the kind: thereby showing the difference between real life and melodrama, which is quite beyond my powers of description to express. He came straight on and put his hand on Evan's shoulder.

"Was you feelin' well enough to see some'un as wants to see you?" he asked. Martha was up in arms in an instant.

"Who wants to see him?" she asked quickly, before Evan could reply.

"It's one of the crew as took him down there," he answered, pointing to the sea, "I guess he don't mean no harm."

"All right Jim, send him along, I'll see him," said Evan, and Jim retired.

Evan took Martha's hand in both of his and stroked it. "You dear girl," he said, "what's the good of trying to thank you. I'm beginning to think you and Jim are getting quite fond of me."

Martha withdrew her hand and turned away her head—it was gall and wormwood to hear her name coupled with Jim by Evan.

"Here you are!" they heard Jim say, and he came round the corner of the house, followed by a lank and lean individual whom Evan recognized as one of the miners who had helped to bury him in the sand. He was feeling far too languid to entertain resentment, and he smiled good-naturedly at the man, who hung back in a sheepish, awkward way.

"How goes it, sonny?" said the miner.

"Oh, I'm all right," said Evan, "getting along first-rate. I guess I'll be about again in another week. What's the news?"

"Waal" said the miner, who if the truth be known was none other than the gentleman yclept Hank—surname unknown—who had nearly kicked Evan's head off six weeks ago, only Evan didn't know it nor Martha either, fortunately perhaps for Hank. "Waal, fact is me and the boys got talking things over like and we concluded that p'raps we'd played it a bit rough on you down over thar," and he jerked his thumb seawards.

"Oh! that's all right," began Evan, but Hank wasn't to be interrupted.

"Waal, I don't know but what it isn't," he continued, "leastways what we concluded was

that we'd just put up a hat for you and I've brought it along, and damned if you ain't a good pluck'd un for a Britisher anyway—that's what the boys said." And so saying he put a bag into Evan's lap. Then he turned and fled.

Evan's illness had done him good. It had had a softening effect, as illnesses often have, and the tender care lavished on him by Jim and Martha had touched him deeply. In the early days of his convalescence he had guessed how the land lay and it did not tax his powers of intuition very deeply to discover that Martha cared for him as much as Jim cared for her.

Sentiments of this nature are not disguised with anything like the ease in real life that they are in fiction, and the woman who is taken so completely aback by the avowal of man's affection that she doesn't know what to say has lived so many years in the pages of romance that she can no longer be considered young, while the man who—but then men are fools anyway where women are concerned, so it doesn't much matter.

Hampstead had known little of Evan's life during the seven years, for his letters had grown fewer and farther between as time went on, and

his experiences became less and less fit for publication even in the family circle.

He had been as most young Englishmen are at the start, and was very much as gold-diggers are at the finish, with this somewhat remarkable difference that he had retained through all the rough associations of a miner's life that refinement of bearing and language which had earned for him the complimentary appellation by which he had been designated during his trial at Murphy's bar.

He had been no better or worse than the average of his associates, which however is not imputing to him an exceedingly high standard of morality. He had made money in the various camps in British Columbia, and like ninety-nine miners out of every hundred he had, after years of privation and toil, nothing whatever to show for it.

The results of a twelvemonths' hard labour up country would be thrown away in a week in one of the towns on the coast which practically lived on the miners. While it lasted the fun was fast and furious, but it never lasted long and Evan had gained no greater experience and saved no more money than the majority. All were young and

most were foolish in those days. Evan only made one enemy, himself; and the chances of reconciliation unfortunately grew smaller with advancing years. This is the case with other people besides gold miners.

They had written to him regularly from home, but postal communications were even less to be relied upon in those regions forty years ago than they are now and many of the little mother's and Uncle Bob's letters went astray, and missing links in the chain of correspondence are fatal to a continuity of interest. So it came about insensibly, after the first year or two when Evan did not appear with the promised fortune and the date of his return was postponed time and again, that, without any actual diminution of affection on either side, the void caused by his absence grew to be less acutely felt and they managed to get on very well without him, even as he in his turn managed to get on very well without them.

Of late he had changed his address so often that he had had no news at all, and finding they got no answer to their letters, they, too, had gradually ceased to write, and the little mother sorrowed in silence, as mothers will over an absent eldest born.

As for the Guv'nor, true to his word, he never

mentioned Evan's name, and the probabilities are that he experienced some satisfaction in being able to think, "I told you so," even if his principles forbade his giving utterance to this the most irritating sentence in our language.

Of his New York friend Even heard but seldom. Armitage had written, pressing him to give up the shiftless life of the West and return to civilization, but Evan had always held on in the hope of one day "striking it rich." Others around him made their pile and why not he? Lord Armitage so far had not gone back to England, but he had been everywhere else preaching ever on the same lines and enjoying the same reputation for eccentricity.

CHAPTER XIII.

VAN had come down to 'Frisco for the first time since his arrival in British Columbia, with no definite purpose in view. He had merely desired to change the scene of his annual spree and have a general look round. He had brought lots of money with him which he had only just begun to spend, when the political discussion at the Sampson House and its attendant consequences had temporarily stopped his extravagant career. Safe in his kit, which had been brought over to Murphy's bar, he had enough to keep him on an ordinary scale of expenditure (though by no means on a gold miner's) for many a long day, and it is probable that in the private overhaul of his effects undertaken in a spirit of pardonable curiosity by Mr. Daniel Murphy, the elucidation of this matter may have considerably influenced that gentleman

in his favour. The contents of the bag presented by "Hank," which were the equivalent of at least $500, served to confirm this view. Under these circumstances therefore and from the vantage ground of a self-constituted banker, he viewed with no special dissatisfaction the prospect of an alliance between the ancient houses of Evans and Murphy, for though he had never heard of the French proverb *l'un aime et l'autre se laisse aimer*, he hit upon much the same truth which it implies when he described his daughter as being "dead stuck on the Britisher."

Evan had arrived at the same conclusion, for there was no disguising the fact. Specially patent was it to poor Jim Fink who suffered the tortures usually ascribed, though upon what grounds it were difficult to say, to the damned. Mrs. Murphy saw it, too, and as she was irrevocably committed to Jim who, instinct told her, would make a far better husband to her daughter and son-in-law to herself than Evan ever would even if the latter's intentions were "strictly honourable" which she very much doubted. She looked forward anxiously to the day when he should be well enough to leave them. Mrs. Murphy shared her husband's view about Martha being "dead stuck

on the Britisher," but she thought it was only a passing fancy, such as the young lady in common with other members of her sex had already entertained in other directions. Once Evan was away, as he certainly would be very shortly now, things would go on just as they had done before and in due course Martha's affections would revert to their proper and natural channel, which in Mrs. Murphy's opinion pointed solely in the direction of Jim Fink. So reasoned the partner of Murphy's joys and sorrows, and no doubt on general maternal principles she was right enough, but in this particular instance she happened to be wrong, as many a mother has been before.

In another week Evan was up and about again. The first use he made of his liberty was to settle up accounts with Mr. Murphy, in which operation it is needless to say that the bar-keeper got infinitely the best of it. But Evan didn't in the least mind. He was generous to a fault under any circumstances, and he was naturally not disposed to cavil at an extra fifty dollars or so under these. So whatever Mr. Murphy said "went" as the Western saying goes, and Mr. Murphy metaphorically kicked himself for days afterwards pending recovery from surprise at his own moderation.

Evan went out to Jim who was bucking wood behind the house for all he was worth as a huge pyramid of sawdust on the ground testified: but then Jim always did everything for all he was worth. He looked up and stopped sawing as Evan approached.

"I'm off, old man," said Evan, "to-morrow."

The air suddenly grew so rarified that Jim could hardly breathe. He said nothing but reached for his coat which was hanging on the jamb of the back kitchen door and threw it over his shoulders.

"Come and have a smoke," he said, "I'm about through," and they both sat down on the wood pile, but they did not notice a woman's form glide swiftly round the corner of the house and take up its position behind the fence within ten feet of where they sat.

They both filled their pipes and it was some minutes before either of them spoke.

Then Jim said slowly—"Going away are yer?"

"Yes," answered Evan, "Jim, old chap, I'm not going to try and thank either of you for all you've done for me."

Jim appreciated the inference as much as Martha had disapproved of having her name coupled with his.

"Now see here, Jim, I'm a friend of yours and you know it. The only way I can show my friendship is by going away—you know why."

"Yes," said Jim, even more slowly still, "I guess I do."

"God knows I'd as soon chop off my right hand with that axe as spoil your happiness, for you're just as good a chap as I've ever come across, I couldn't help it, upon my soul I couldn't. She's nothing to me anyway, save that I owe her a deep sense of gratitude, and she's everything to you."

Had they had ears to hear or eyes to see they might have heard a groan from the woman behind the fence and seen her press both hands upon her heart as if she feared the sound of its throbbing might reach them ten feet away. Her face was drawn and white and the expression of her eyes was pitiable to behold. But she suffered, as many of us do, alone.

"Its just this way, Evan," said Jim, "if I thought she'd be happy with you and you with her, I'd go myself, to-morrow, or leastways I wouldn't do that 'cos I might p'raps be of some good to the pair of you, but I'd grin and bear it, so help me God I would, but it ain't no sort o' use.

There's nothing in it anyway. You ain't suited to each other that's where the trouble is. You're a gentleman you are, and Mart (Jim's sense of loyalty to Martha made him hesitate in search of a word which would rightly express his exact meaning but he wasn't altogether successful in his discovery) well, Mart, you see, she isn't."

Evan however was following his trend of thought rather than his language and the incongruity of the idea did not even make him smile.

"I've been with her now," continued Jim, "day on and day off this seven year. I've watched her grow like, and ever since that time what we was on the ship together, I sort of made up my mind as how I'd marry her if I ever could, and I do b'lieve, Evan, though you think I'm putting on a bit of side like, that she do think something of me. I know that I never felt scared of any one as came bumming around afore you came. Bless you she didn't care two straws about any one of 'em though there was some tidy looking coves amongst 'em too : but she's stuck on you she is, the old man's dead right, she's stuck on you, the trouble is you ain't stuck on her

and—I am, so there aint anything in it any way."

"Of course there is'nt," said Evan reassuringly. "It's only a fancy, Jim, you know how girls are. She'll forget me in a week and it will be all right between you as it ought to be. I shall take the steamer for Victoria, I hear she leaves at daybreak to-morrow, and get back to the mines. You must write and tell me how you get along. You don't bear me any malice, I know, for as true as we stand here I've never tried to get behind you."

For all answer Jim held out his hand and Evan grasped it in silence.

"I shan't say good-bye, Jim, to any of them," said Evan. "It's no good. You can explain I had to go away in a hurry. I've only got my kit to handle and you'll smuggle that down for me, and I'll get on board late to-night. You tell them all about it in the morning."

"Well," answered Jim, "I guess that'll be as good a way as any: but Lord, I'm scared as to how she'll—"

"Nonsense, that'll be all right," replied Evan. "You do as I tell you and————God bless you both." He didn't know what else to say, and he said it lamely, but he meant it.

They both went to the bar to get a drink which puts the finishing touch on most conversations, whether of frivolous or serious import, out West. And the woman behind the fence sank down on the ground and hid her face in her hands.

CHAPTER XIV.

FORTUNE favoured Evan beyond his expectations. He found that the Murphy family, with the exception of "the old man," were going to an "ice-cream social" that afternoon and would not be back till quite late. His idea was to go quietly on board before they returned and they, he thought, being under the impression that he had retired for the night, would not find out that he had gone till the following morning when the steamer bearing him northwards would be many miles out to sea. Their absence too would give Jim the opportunity he wanted of slipping out unobserved with Evan's kit. There was little fear of detection from Mr. Murphy himself: his duties kept him rivetted to the bar, and it would require a "social" of a very novel order indeed to entice him away from the engrossing and profitable occupation of retailing bad spirits at a dollar a drink.

When Mrs. Murphy at the noon-day meal communicated their intention Jim and Evan exchanged glances: but their complacency was somewhat disturbed later on when, on going out to help the family into the rig which was to bear them to their destination some ten miles out in the country, they discovered that Miss Martha at the last moment had declared her intention of remaining at home. She had a very bad headache, she said, and was going to lie down.

Jim and Evan looked at each other again, though this time with nothing like the same degree of satisfaction.

"By gad, Jim, she's smelt a rat," said Evan when the Murphys had driven off; and he turned pale at the thought.

When a man knows a woman is "dead stuck on him" and he doesn't reciprocate the delicate attention, he's invariably afraid of her.

"Get out," replied Jim, "she often 'as a 'edache, 'as Mart. She don't know nothink, bless yer: 'ow should she? This is just as lucky as may be, things a-falling out like this. If you've got yer togs ready I'll have 'em down to the *Saratoga* in no time."

Evan had his togs ready and Jim shouldered

the heavy canvas bag as if it were a feather weight.

"I'll fix things for you with the purser," he said, "he's a pal of mine: I'll be back in an hour," and off he trotted by the back way in blissful unconsciousness that headaches are occasionally no obstacle to observation from the conning tower of a bedroom window.

Evan meanwhile, with equal disregard for feminine penetration, took advantage of the opportunity to go down town and get a shave.

Mr. Murphy at the receipt of custom and Miss Murphy with a bad headache upstairs in her own room were left therefore as the only occupants of the premises.

But the plans of other people were furthered that day besides the nefarious designs of Evan and Jim.

It so happened that a few minutes after the latter's departure the rafters rang again in vibrating response to Mr. Murphy's yells for Jim to come to the bar.

A messenger had come up from down town to summon Mr. Murphy to his lawyer's office on important business involving several thousand dollars, and Mr. Murphy was raving mad because

Jim was not instantly on hand to relieve him.

"What's up, father?" enquired Martha from the head of the stairs, and it must be admitted that the tone of her voice gave no evidence of the bodily suffering which had prevented her participation in the ice-cream social.

"Where the blankety blank is that blankety blank fool Jim?" yelled her irate parent. "I've got to go down town on business and of course he's never on hand when he's wanted."

The accusation was as unjust as it was untrue, for Jim was always on hand when he was wanted: but neither justice nor truth gets a fair show when our angry passions rise.

"Jim's gone out, father, with Mr. Evans."

"Blankety blank Mr. Evans."

A pause.

"Say, Mart," in dulcet tones.

"Hullo?"

"What's the matter with you coming down and looking after the bar?"

"What, *me?*"

"Yes, you. There ain't no one here now 'xcept old Atkins, and he's fast asleep and won't hurt you anyway. Chances are no one else'll come in while I'm away. I've *got* to go.

Lawyer Smiley wants me bad on business—I know what it's about. Shan't be gone more'n hour."

Martha reflected for a moment and then she said :—

"All right, Dad, I'll come," and Miss Murphy slowly descended the stairs with a novel in her hand.

Mr. Murphy was delighted. He had put forward the idea rather as a forlorn hope than with any expectation of its being accepted, for Miss Murphy did not usually conform to parental suggestions.

"Why, Mart," said her father, "blame me if this ain't real good of you. See here, now, derned if I won't pay you well for this job. It's worth a five dollar bill," and Mr. Murphy took a roll of notes from the open drawer behind the bar.

"Oh, stow that, Dad," she replied, sullenly, "I don't want yer money," and she pushed the bill the old man tendered her away. Clear out and get back as quick as you can. I guess Jim'll be along directly so it won't be for long anyway."

Mr. Murphy was nothing loth to save his five dollar bill, so he replaced it in the drawer which he then pushed to. It shut with a snap.

"See here, Dad, I don't propose to try my

hand at mixing drinks, 'cos I aint no good at it. All I'll do is to sit here quiet till you or Jim comes and see that no one robs the drawer. If they want drinks they'll have to wait and I'll tell 'em so."

Just then a second messenger came in from Lawyer Smiley to know if "Dan Murphy was coming down to his office this side judgement day or not, for Joe Birkett was getting mad at being kep' waiting, and the deal would be off in another quarter of an hour." So Mr. Murphy flew to keep his appointment just as he was—that is to say, minus his waistcoat, which he had hung up behind the bar on account of the exceeding great heat of the day. He never wore a coat by any chance. It is unprofessional amongst a certain class of bar-keepers. In that waistcoat there was a pocket, and in that pocket there was a key—the key of the drawer which had closed with a snap, and of this fact Miss Martha Murphy was perfectly well aware. The reason why she had not gone to the ice-cream social was not because she was averse to ice-cream or had any antipathy to socials—neither was it because she had a headache. She had locked herself up in her room that afternoon with the express object of scheming and plan-

ning to gain possession of that key: and now circumstances over which apparently she had had no control placed it most temptingly within her reach. She looked round the room. Save for the recumbent and snoring figure of old Atkins, a miner, in one of the bunks, who was so fast asleep that nothing short of an earthquake was likely to wake him, she was entirely alone. She listened for several seconds to the steady tick of the cuckoo clock which hung over the bar. She put her hand up towards the waistcoat and felt in one of the pockets. It was empty. Then she gave a start, for something sprang on to the counter beside her and rubbed against her arm. It was the cat, but in the excited state of her nerves she thought it was the devil himself. She swept the beast away and searched the other pocket. The key was there sure enough, and in a trice she had fitted it into the lock. But just as she was in the act of turning it there was a whirr-whirr from the cuckoo as of avenging wings: and she stood still with beating heart for the first time in her life on the threshold of crime. But the warnings of cat and of the cuckoo were of no avail. Old Atkins emitted several extra loud premonitory snorts and roused himself uneasily in his drunken sleep, but

to no purpose. They all did their best, and no more could be expected of them, but unfortunately they none of them knew Miss Martha Murphy. Her mind was made up, and if what she wanted was in the drawer she was going to have it. That was the key-note to her character. She cared not what price she paid out of her own or other people's money for the gratification of her desires.

Ere the cuckoo had finished his wheezy announcement that it was four o'clock and the cat had recovered her equanimity Miss Murphy had taken three bills from the roll inside the drawer —one for fifty and two for a hundred each. She replaced them by three one-dollar bills from her own pocket and then, snapping the drawer to, sat quietly down to read "Pendennis," which was the book she had brought downstairs with her. (N.B.—Dollar bills had only just found their way to the coast.)

In a very short time Jim Fink came in. He had his own key of the drawer, of which fact Miss Murphy was also aware. His astonishment at seeing Martha was unbounded. She explained how her father had asked her to tend the bar.

"I guess I'll go upstairs again now," said Martha, "and lie down: my head's real bad, so what-

ever comes don't you let anyone rout me out again."

Jim promised, and she went upstairs with an alacrity which is not usually co-existent with the acutest forms of neuralgia.

Half an hour later she had left the house clad in an old dress and bonnet of her mother's which disguised her beyond chance of recognition.

Where she went and what she did it would unquestionably be a breach of confidence to disclose.

Jim tended the bar till Mr. Murphy's return, which was not till close upon seven o'clock. The deal with Joe Birkett had lasted far longer than had been expected, as deals have a tendency to do. It had for its object the acquisition of certain mining shares and claims and involved negotiations of protracted duration, with the prospect of millions in store. The only person who made anything out of it, as a matter of fact, was the nearest saloon-keeper, who got paid in cash for the drinks imbibed.

That, amongst others, is the advantage of keeping a saloon. You need have no bad debts unless you want to: it depends solely upon your strength of mind. You have only to refuse credit and

you will to a certainty be paid in cash. I speak from experience, though whether personal or general is no concern of the reader. Then again you are always sure of your custom. Traders generally, including the noble army of martyrs in the story-telling line, are subject to fluctuations in their respective markets : for fashions change and stories do not always go down with the public. Drinks however invariably do, which is all in favour of the saloon-keeper.

Bars are great institutions, whether in Eastern or Western countries. It is, however, remarkable that their success should be so largely dependent upon Christian patronage. In a purely Mahomedan community a public house or saloon situated on the most promising corner would fetch no higher rent than a suite of "mortuary parlors" or a fifth-rate fried fish shop. I do not attempt to account for the reason : I am content with stating the fact.

CHAPTER XV.

T all fell out just as Jim Fink had predicted. Evan went on board before the social revellers in ice-cream had returned home without even saying "good-bye" to Mr. Murphy. Jim came down to see the last of him and they had a final drink together at the bar of the steamer.

It was an enormous relief to Evan's mind to feel that he was really off, and it is to be feared that he thought little enough of the blank in the existence of one person at least which his departure would cause. Martha's devotion weighed on him like a thousand of bricks, and he had not been free for some time from an uneasy feeling that she might do something rash—take him off by the scuff of the neck one morning and marry him by force, Jim Fink and other considerations notwithstanding—it was therefore not without a sense of satisfaction that he shook Jim warmly by the hand for the last time and turned into the berth which had been secured for him. Jim had

promised to square all accounts with the Murphy family in the morning and, as he said, "break it gently to Mart."

"I'm a bit scared as to how she'll take it," were his last words, "but I guess she'll come round."

"Come round," Evan had assured him in reply, "of course she will. Why, what do you suppose she's going to do? Run after me? Not much, old man, women aren't built that way. Tell you what Jim, I'll come down and dance at your wedding yet if you write and tell me when it's to be."

Evan woke next morning with a start. The engines had stopped and, as in the legend of Jim Bludso, "there was runnin' and cursin'" and cries of "man overboard." He scrambled into some clothes and bolted out of his cabin to find that it was not a man but a woman who had apparently fallen into the sea. A boat was immediately lowered. Evan's thoughts instantly flew to his own rescue of Jim Fink in mid-Atlantic seven years before and he wondered why no one had jumped in after her.

"Who saw her go overboard?" he asked the group of motley passengers who were leaning over

the bulwarks, but he got no answer. No one amongst them had actually seen the accident. All the information he could elicit was to the effect that a scream had been heard and a dark body which looked like that of a woman had been observed in the water. It had however almost immediately sunk and so far had not re-appeared. They all watched with straining eyes. The boat pulled aimlessly round and round for about half an hour, the steamer meanwhile drifting further and further away with the tide. Then in obedience to a signal from the captain it pulled on board again, having seen no sign of the unfortunate woman. Directly the boat had been hoisted up the *Saratoga* steamed full speed ahead to make up for lost time and the captain came down off the bridge to institute an enquiry.

"Who's missing?" he asked the purser. "How many women did you have aboard?"

The purser produced the list. There were only thirteen women all told.

"Call 'em over," said the captain: "Rout 'em out: we'll soon find out who the derned fool is anyway."

In five minutes a dozen women in all sorts and conditions of toilet, some with children and

some without, had emerged from the staterooms and fore-cabin.

"Answer to your names," said the captain, and as the purser read out from the list in his hand they respectively said "Here" to the muster roll.

The purser came to the ninth name on the list.

"Martha Murphy?" he sang out.

Evan who was leaning casually against the bulwark suddenly sat down and a deadly feeling of faintness came over him, but he said nothing.

The name was unchallenged.

"Guess that's her all right," said the captain: "Who was she, anyway?"

"Dunno," answered the purser, "She must have taken her ticket at the office down town. I never saw her come aboard."

"Who did? asked the captain.

The steward had seen her and shown her into her state-room about eight o'clock the previous evening.

Evan hung upon his words as he described her, and as he recognized the portrait of the unfortunate girl he had known so well he felt that her death lay at his door and that he should never hold up his head again.

"Feeling bad, mate?" asked a friendly miner,

seeing how white he looked. "You ain't much of a sailor. She ain't hardly moving. Have a nip?" and he tendered Evan a flat bottle containing whiskey.

Evan murmured his thanks and took a long deep draught of the raw spirit as if it had been water. It burnt his throat like fire but it made a man of him.

The miner remarked afterwards to a pal "that he was derned if he'd ever met anyone with a tidier notion of a swill."

"Who saw her go overboard?" asked the captain, repeating Evan's query of a few minutes before, but he got no greater satisfaction.

"Did any of you folks know her?" was his next enquiry, turning to the passengers.

Evan waited to see if anyone answered and then he said with the courage engendered by strong drink "I knew her!"

"Oh! you knew her," said the captain. "What might you know about her?"

Evan briefly stated that she was the daughter of Daniel Murphy, proprietor of Murphy's bar, and added he had no idea that she was going to Victoria.

"I saw her yesterday morning," he said, "at

her father's house, and I'm quite sure that she did not intend leaving home then. I can't understand it and I'm naturally very much shocked. It will be an awful grief to them all at home."

"Did you come aboard with her?" asked the captain pointedly.

"What do you mean?" retorted Evan fiercely. "Don't I tell you that I didn't know she was coming."

"All right, sonny, keep your hair on," said the captain: "I suppose I've got a right to ask questions on my own ship haven't I?"

As Evan was about to reply he felt his coat pulled, on looking round he saw a dark-skinned, half-breed Indian who evidently wanted to speak to him.

"What is it?" he asked angrily.

"You Mr. Evans?" enquired the half-breed, who was only a boy and looked terribly nervous and frightened.

"Yes, my name's Evans: what do you want?" said Evan, annoyed at the interruption.

"She give me this for you," continued the half-breed, and he produced a folded piece of paper, on which Evan read the following address in pencil :—

Mister Eavan Eavans, Esquire,
On the *Sarahtoga.*

To be given him after by Tom.

The passengers crowded round as he read the letter, feeling instinctively that it had something to do with the accident. The captain meanwhile impatiently awaited developments. Evan hurriedly glanced through it and looked at the signature. The letter was badly written and villainously spelt, but the name at the end was undoubtedly that of Martha Murphy.

Evan read it over carefully twice and then handed it to the captain.

"I guess when you've read that you'll know as much about it as I do. I'm going to my stateroom. If you want me you can come and find me. Let me have the letter back, please," and he moved away, for he wanted to be alone and think this thing out.

The captain had some difficulty in deciphering the letter, which ran as follows:—

My dere Mister Eavens i hop you will foregive me if you are unhappy when I ham ded but i have maidup my mine to jump hoverbord plese tel them atome i coodent helpit i coodent mary jim

cos i ded not luv him be kine to Tom the harf brede cos he as bene kine to me four my sake

Your Afekshu·iiate frien

MARTHA MURPHY.

When he had mastered its contents he said to the passengers :—

"Well, I guess its all up with Miss Martha Murphy: she jumped overboard intentional, that's what she's done—this letter proves it.

"Says she couldn't marry a man called Jim 'cos she didn't love him, most respectable sentiments, but by Gad she's paid dear to keep 'em. Lets me out anyway. By the bye some one said they heard a scream, who was it?"

Several testified to having heard a scream and a heavy splash but no one had seen the occurrence.

"All right," said the captain. "Here, you," turning to the Indian boy who had given Evan the letter, "you come along with me, I want to have a talk with you."

The boy looked horribly frightened but all the same he followed the captain.

They went up on the bridge together where the passengers, burning though they were with curiosity, could not accompany them. There, they were joined a few minutes later, at the

captain's request, by Evan. Tom's story told in broken English gave a perfectly satisfactory account of the proceeding as far as he was concerned.

He had been employed as a salesman in a fruit shop kept by a friend of Martha's in 'Frisco for the last two years: had seen her off and on all the time. He did not know any other member of the family and had never been inside Murphy's bar, though he knew them all by sight. He was going up to Victoria on his own account as he had saved a little money and thought he would get work at the mines, where he had heard wages were high. He had come on board about midnight and did not know that Miss Murphy was one of the passengers. He had not taken a berth but had slept on a sofa in the saloon. She recognized and seemed very pleased to see him, asked him to find a Mr. Evans among the passengers and give him a letter. He said he would find him if he was on board and give him the letter. Then she went into her stateroom while he waited outside. After about ten minutes as it seemed to him she came out again with the letter in her hand. She gave him a dollar and he went out of the saloon to find Mr. Evans. Very soon after-

wards, he did not know how many minutes, he heard a scream and a splash as the other passengers had done but he had not seen the accident.

He did not know from what part of the ship she had thrown herself overboard—perhaps from the window. They went to the stateroom which Martha had occupied and found that the window was quite large enough for a woman of her size to have got through. On the floor was a small bag, open, containing a few articles of woman's toilet.

"That's it," said the captain, "you can bet your sweet life that's what she's done, chucked herself out of that thar port-hole as sure as your standing thar. Well there's no accounting for the ways of women-folk anyway."

Evan agreed with the captain that there is no accounting for the ways of woman-kind. Other people have arrived at the same conclusion both before and since the occurrence described above. Martha was the last person on earth to whom he would ever have ascribed so entirely an irrational act as that of taking her own life and he found great difficulty in bringing himself to believe that she had done so. But there was no getting over the fact: Martha had thrown herself into the sea and had been drowned. There was her letter, and

there was the evidence of the half-breed Indian to prove it. He turned to put another question to Tom but the boy had disappeared. He evidently had told all he knew and was frightened at being mixed up in the affair, thought Evan, so he left him alone and sat down to write and break the tidings to Mrs. Murphy. It was not a particularly easy letter to write and Evan felt unutterably miserable during its composition : but he got through it better than he thought he would—as frequently happens in our most arduous undertakings. He enclosed a copy of the entry in the captain's log which was short, sharp and to the point : he got that worthy to sign it *par surcroit de surete.* To Jim Fink he wrote only a line which he inclosed in his letter to Mrs. Murphy :

My Dear Jim :—God knows, old chap, you can hardly regret what has happened more than I do. Keep your promise and write to me all the same.

Ever your friend,

EVAN.

Evan had asked the captain whether on their arrival in Victoria there was likely to be any enquiry at which he would have to attend and was intensely relieved at his answer : " I guess

not! There's the log. If there is, you and the boy will hear of it sure enough."

It was scarcely more than a nine hours', let alone a nine days', wonder. Evan kept to himself for the rest of the voyage and avoided the half-breed Tom who was assiduously pumped by all the other passengers, particularly the women-folk, whenever they got a chance. This did not occur often for Tom was terribly seasick and gave such unmistakable evidence that he would rather be left alone, that those who were in a condition to cross-examine him very soon gave it up as a bad job.

Before twenty-four hours were over all remembrance of Martha Murphy was buried deep as the unfortunate girl herself as far as the passengers of the *Saratoga* were concerned, save only in the minds of Evan Evans and possibly the half-breed Tom.

Evan waited twenty-four hours in Victoria on the chance of his being wanted at any enquiry into the matter, but nobody called for him: so at the end of that time he considered himself free to carry out his original intention of getting up to the mines. He need have given himself no sort of anxiety on the subject: Victorians had other

and more important things to occupy their attention in those days than the suicide of an unknown young woman on an American steamer. The whole town was in a fever of excitement over the the news of "Gold, Gold in Cariboo," and not news only but the actual metal itself, which had actually begun to arrive in large quantities. One consignment of over six hundred pounds dead weight, valued at $150,000, and taken out of a single claim in three months, had just come down. and rumours that many others were producing $5,000 a day sent everybody mad. Evan was wild to be off up country and cursed his luck that he should have taken his ill-fated trip to 'Frisco when he did, which was just before the big hauls had been made. The town was full of miners who had come down from the mines to spend their money only as miners can and the bars were doing an enormous trade. Their exploits and extravagance were the talk of the place. Only a day or two previously Sam Craggs, a well-known character, had broken all previous records and earned for himself a reputation which will probably outlive the memory of the first governor. With every pocket stuffed full of twenty-dollar gold pieces he had appeared at one

of the bars and insisted on treating everybody present to champagne at ten dollars a bottle.

The "crowd" played out sooner than the champagne which, though bad, was plentiful. So this golden calf had sent out into the highways and byways and compelled them to come in—not that they wanted, in good sooth, any great compulsion. When all had had their fill, for even a miner's capacity in the matter of champagne is limited (what he can stand in the way of whiskey no man will ever know), Sam was only just beginning to get lively: and in obedience to his peremptory orders to "set 'em up again" the bartender filled all the glasses, amounting to some forty odd, and left them standing on the bar.

Sam Craggs gave his *invites* one last chance of redeeming their fallen fame as topers, and then seeing that no one took advantage of his offer he swept the counter clean with one imperial sweep of his arm.

The applause which followed this display of the qualities so dear to the mining heart stimulated him to further effort. "Any more wine?" he asked.

"You bet, there's as much more as you can pay for!"

Sam was on to "cases" now : bottles were no longer satisfying. The barkeeper offhand stated roughly "half a dozen?" but Sam was not to be put off with any indefinite, loosly-made assertions of that kind. He was bent, as he emphatically stated, on "breaking the——bar if he died for it," and the bystanders cheered him till the broken wine glasses on the floor jingled again. So Mr. Barkeeper had to go out and take stock. His statement after five minutes' absence that he had only three cases left was received by Mr. Craggs and his satellites with positive derision. Sam offered to lay 500 to 1 in twenty dollar gold pieces that he would "do for the lot inside of fifteen minutes," but there was no takers, luckily for the wagerer as it turned out for it took him nearly half an hour to dispose of them.

The cases were brought in and opened. Sam set the bottles up at the end of the saloon and proceeded to "pot" at them with a six-shooter, threatening to let "daylight" into anybody who drew a bead but himself. Sam had all the shooting his own way. But his previous potations had unsteadied his aim and he missed many more than he hit. The operation though it was highly amusing to the crowd was too slow for Sam. He

considered it "damned monotonous" and did not scruple to say so. Genius however is seldom at fault for long, and the most brilliant inspiration of the century suddenly dawned upon his besotted mind. There was a rudely improvised bowling alley at the back of the bar, and it occured to him that there could not be a more expeditious and at the same time more unusual way of getting rid of the remaining two dozen bottles than by substituting them for the wooden ninepins.

The whole gang therefore repaired to the bowling alley behind the bar and Mr. Craggs made up for lost time by disposing of the balance in four consecutive shots. He was certainly the most popular man in Victoria. But Sam was not through yet. On their way back to the bar they discovered another and last case of champagne which the barkeeper had overlooked or more probably had reserved for future contingencies. His excuse that he had not produced it before was to the effect that it was a special brand which cost exactly double the ordinary price—twenty instead of ten dollars a bottle. The price cut no figure in Mr. Craggs' estimation; the higher the better.

The last case was smashed open as the others had been and Sam proceeded in wild frenzy to

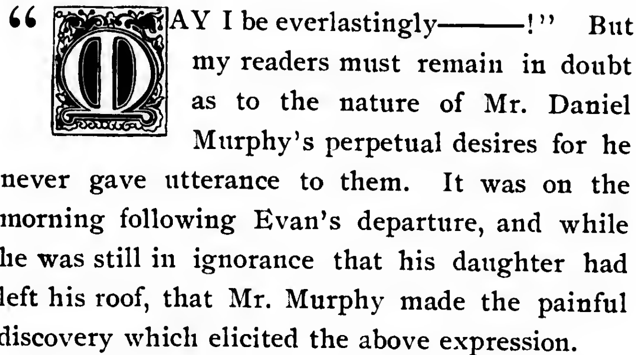
jump upon its contents and pound them to pieces with his heavy miner's boots, getting badly cut in the operation.

He had paid cash for each case as he had consumed it, but his pockets were still heavy with twenty dollar gold pieces which he was in honour bound to get rid of. A large mirror at the end of the bar attracted his attention. Such an opportunity might not occur again. His last handful of coins went into the middle of the mirror, which was smashed into a thousand pieces, and when Sam proudly turned his pockets inside out to prove to the crowd that he was really "stone broke" their enthusiasm knew no bounds. Now the rest of the acts of Mr. Samuel Craggs and company are they not written (as are the above) in the book of the Chronicles of Cariboo?

But Evan was in no mood to appreciate even the recital of festivities of this nature and on the evening of the day after his arrival he went on board the *Otter* which plied between Victoria and Yale on the Fraser and would take him that far on his up country journey.

At the gangway he met the half-breed Tom.

CHAPTER XVI.



"MAY I be everlastingly———!" But my readers must remain in doubt as to the nature of Mr. Daniel Murphy's perpetual desires for he never gave utterance to them. It was on the morning following Evan's departure, and while he was still in ignorance that his daughter had left his roof, that Mr. Murphy made the painful discovery which elicited the above expression.

Pecuniary loss is as a very whetstone to our faculties—it puts a wonderfully keen edge upon them in an incredibly short space of time. It did not take Mr. Murphy more than a quarter of a second to make up his mind that Jim had taken the money, but why he should have done so without permission, or without compliance with the formality of leaving an I. O. U. in the box in its place, was more than Mr. Murphy in his perplexity could understand. An unpleasant recollection

of an over due wage account, amounting possibly to more than the abstracted sum asserted itself, but still the proceeding was entirely unlike Jim and Mr. Murphy failed to understand it. Meanwhile there was wailing and gnashing of teeth upstairs for Mrs. Murphy had discovered that Martha had flown and had broken the tidings to Jim.

"Jim," she said, "Mart's gone, he's took her," and she sobbed as women will.

Jim staggered, he put his hands out behind him in search of support till he struck the wall. Then he straightened himself up. He arrived at a conclusion as quick as Mr. Murphy had done, with this slight difference that he was right, whereas Mr. Murphy was wrong. He did not believe that Evan had taken her, though there was no disbelieving her mother's assertion that she had gone. He thought that she had followed him, but his mind refused to accept the idea that Evan was treacherous. His instinct told him the truth. Martha had gone but they did not know yet that she had gone with Evan, If she had it was without the latter's knowledge or consent.

"Don't say it," he said, and Mrs. Murphy beside herself with grief as she was wondered at his

coolness, "don't say it till you know. It's an awful thing to say."

"You're a fool and always was a fool," cried Mrs. Murphy in her sorrow. "Why didn't you marry her long afore he ever come nigh us as I told you to? I don't know what her father'll say."

Poor Jim, he didn't get much comfort from his prospective mother-in-law.

"You tell him," said Mrs. Murphy, "I dursn't," and she went to confide and seek solace in the daughters that were left to her.

Jim went down stairs. Mr. Murphy was alone in the bar for it was early yet and no customers had arrived. He had thought matters over and concluded he had better not say too much to Jim on the matter of the missing dollars. He would simply straighten up that wage account and pay him regularly in future. Jim was too good a man to run any risk of losing. But the sight of his face as he entered the room gave Mr. Murphy other things to think about.

"Hullo," he said, "what's up, feeling queer? Have a drink."

Jim sat down on the wooden bench which ran along the side of the shanty. "No," he said "I'm all right; I don't want no drinks. Mart's gone."

"What?" thundered Mr. Murphy, "Gone!—with that damned Britisher. I'll—"

"I don't think so," said Jim, "though the missis do."

Mr. Murphy began to realize that there might be another aspect to the question of the missing money. He remembered yesterday afternoon perfectly now and the circumstances under which he had left Martha in charge. "My God," he said, "and she's robbed her father into the bargain. The drawer is shy two-forty-seven and I thought you'd took it on account of back wages."

Jim sat as one dazed. He said nothing at all while Mr. Murphy proceeded to dilate upon what had happened on the afternoon of the day previous and how it was evident that Mart must have taken his key from the pocket of his waistcoat which he had left hanging behind the bar and helped herself out of the till, though why she hadn't made it even money while she was about it he professed himself totally unable to understand. Jim got up and walked slowly down the sanded floor and looked out of the window of the bar.

Here he took council with himself. He went back to that day on the sands when he and

Martha had rescued Evan and he had, with the prescience born of affection, foreseen so much of what had happened. He had been prepared in a measure for Martha's caring for Evan : that aspect of the question he had discounted long ago and he —fool that he was—had fondly thought that the latter's departure would put things back in their old position. "As if you can ever reckon on what a woman will do," mused Jim to himself bitterly.

This move on Martha's part was altogether unexpected. He had never imagined for a moment that she would have left her home without a word or a message to any one. The more he turned the whole matter over in his mind the more convinced he felt that Evan was not a party to the transaction, and that if Martha was really with him she would be perfectly safe in his hands. His loyalty to his friend would not allow room for any other conviction; and deep down in his heart was a feeling of sympathy for Martha that her love, as was his own, should be unrequited. This is because Jim really loved her. He had spoken truth to Evan when he had said that he would willingly grin and bear his loss if he thought they two could have been happy together, for Martha's happiness would be the

consideration uppermost in his mind, and he looked upon himself merely as a factor in the combination towards the attainment of that end. He could not make up his mind what was the right thing to do. He felt that no advice he was likely to get from the Murphy family would be of much avail. Mrs. Murphy would weep and wail and Mr. Murphy would curse and swear; but their opinion was of no particular value to Jim. He wanted to bring Martha back to a sense of right and duty, and re-establishment of himself in her affections became at this juncture a purely secondary consideration. The only way he could do that would be to follow her himself. If she had gone with Evan—as he almost hoped she had—she would be easy to find. If not, Jim would still find her. The fact that she had taken the money rather pointed in his mind to the conclusion that she had gone alone, for had there been collusion between them there would have been no necessity for her to have done so, as Evan was provided with funds as Jim knew.

"And you thought I took it," said Jim turning round to Mr. Murphy. "You thought I took two-forty-seven or two-fifty, which ever it was, from the box all on account

of my back wages, did you, boss? Well, you happened to strike it right this time. I guess I'd better give you a receipt for it. That let's the girl out anyway, so you needn't bother about her any more, Make it out ; I ll sign it."

Mr Murphy didn't for a moment believe that Jim had taken the money, and was at a loss to understand his motives in thus voluntarily assuming the debt ; but as he owed Jim the money and more also he felt that he might just as well regard the matter in the light of a discharged liability, so he proceeded to make out a receipt for $250—"a round figure," as he termed it, taking the precaution to add, for wages in full up to date." Despite the loss of his ducats and his daughter he still had an eye to business.

"Here you are," he called out.

Jim came slowly back with the same look which had startled Mr. Murphy on his face. He read the receipt over, which Mr. Murphy hoped he wouldn't do.

"That ain't right," he said in a hard tone, totally unlike his usual voice. "It ain't all, there's a balinse of more than fifty doo me still and you knows it, boss ; you ain't a-going to fool me," and before Mr. Murphy could stop him Jim had

snatched a roll of notes from the open drawer.

Mr. Murphy made a grab at him, as for the moment he seriously thought Jim was off his head, and that possibly his assertion that he had taken the money might be true, but Jim simply wheeled round and being a much taller man held the notes high out of his reach.

"All right, boss, I ain't going to take a cent more than what's coming to me and you knows that too, so don't excite yourself."

He counted out fifty dollars and then handed back the roll to Mr. Murphy.

"You don't want no receipt for this," he said, "as you've made the other out for wages in full to date," and he signed the paper.

"Well," said Mr. Murphy, if you ain't the durndest cove I've struck this many a long day. What's yer game, now, anyway?"

"I'm going a hunting, I am," answered Jim, "if yer want to know."

"See here," said Mr. Murphy, "if yer going after that gal, you don't bring her back here, 'cos I won't have her inside the house. She's disgraced me and disgraced the family, that's what's she's done, and I won't have it. She's a damned bad lot."

"All right," replied Jim, "when I arkses you to take her back it'll be time enough to call hard names. You don't know yet she's gone with the Britisher, and you might as well give her the benefit of the doubt."

"You're a———fool," was all the answer Mr. Murphy vouchsafed him, whence it will be observed that the comfort he derived from his prospective father-in-law was precisely of the same nature as that which he had already received from that aimable gentleman's spouse a short quarter of an hour before.

Some customers came into the bar and he went upstairs to see to Mrs. Murphy.

"I've made up my mind," he said, "I'm going after Mart. The boss says he won't have her in the house again, but I guess you'll be able to fix things up with him. She'll be all right with Evan. I'm sure of him."

"She ain't took much with her, Jim," said Mrs. Murphy, who had been going over her daughters's wardrobe. "Only a small bag with her brush and comb, and a few things, not enough to last her any time at all. Oh, lor! I do wish he'd never come nigh the place."

"Now take it easy mother," replied Jim.

"You leave this racket to me. I've got my pay from the boss and I'll find Mart all right and bring her back again safe and sound."

It did not take Jim long to discover the fact that Martha had been a passenger on board the *Saratoga* for Victoria. There was no mystery about the matter at all, for her name stared him in the face on the register of passengers at the down town office of the steamer where he went to make enquiries. The clerk remembered her coming in to book her passage perfectly well, for he knew her by sight though not as he said to speak to.

In reply to Jim's enquiry as to how she had paid for her passage he told him that she had produced a hundred dollar bill. This he remembered distinctly, for he had only booked two passengers to Victoria in the office, the others having taken their tickets on board the steamer.

On his way back to communicate this information to Mrs. Murphy, which something told him that she would only regard in the light of confirmation of her worst fears, Jim suddenly found himself accosted by a stranger who was asking his way to his hotel.

"Why, surely," said his enquirer, "I know

your face. Where have I met you before?" and Armitage, for he it was, looked long and fixedly at Jim.

Jim shuffled uneasily; he had no particular desire to be recognized just now by Evan's friend, for he felt that enquiries as to his whereabouts and doings might lead to disclosures which it would be difficult to explain, for Jim never faltered for an instant in his loyalty to Evan.

"Now don't tell me who you are," said Armitage, "let me see if I can't remember. I shall be able to put a name to you directly."

"Of course, of course. You are Jim Fink. I remember you perfectly. Can you tell me anything by chance about Mr. Evans. I haven't heard from him for an age. Will you walk part of the way with me?"

Could Jim tell him anything!

Armitage slipped his arm through Jim's in the most natural way in the world. Coal heaver or prince of the blood it was all the same to him, he had the same genial affable way with everyone. He was not slow to preceive that Jim was not at his ease, and he intuitively felt that the cause of his reserve was in someway connected with Evan, of whom he was particularly anxious to get news,

though he had not the remotest idea at the moment that Jim had any later information concerning him than he had himself.

Poor Jim. He didn't know the man he had to deal with. Before he had reached Armitage's hotel the ice had been broken, and after an hour's conference in his sitting room, Jim had nothing left to tell, and Armitage knew all he wanted to know. He entirely shared Jim's view that Martha had followed Evan without the latter's knowledge.

"Jim," he said when the latter had finished, "do you know that I consider Evan is a lucky man to have you for a friend. Now I'm quite willing to help you all I can in this matter upon one condition—not a very hard one—and that is that you will drop calling me 'my lord.' The ordinary 'sir' is quite good enough for me. Will you try and remember that.

"Yes, my lord," answered Jim, but secretly he was rather sorry, for the lower orders love a title as dearly as we do ourselves, however much they may rail against the nobility.

Jim imparted his intention of going up to Victoria on the very first opportunity, and said he was even now on his way to make enquiries about

a boat, for it sometimes happened that an extra steamer put into 'Frisco for water or supplies on her voyage north.

"You can save yourself that trouble. I happen to be bound for Victoria myself," said Armitage. "I have already made the discovery that there is an English boat which will leave here to-morrow. We shan't get first-class accommodation on board, but that doesn't in the least matter to me and I suppose it's very much the same to you.

It being of no consequence to Jim, they arranged to take passage on the following day together instead of waiting for the next trip of the *Saritoga*.

Impatience is the source of many evils. It never occurred to Jim that it would perhaps be better for him to wait and see whether the return steamer from Victoria brought any news throwing light upon the missing girl's movements. He was all eagerness to be off and do something. Inactivity under certain circumstances is akin to torture, and reflection is the acutest form of mental suffering.

Armitage declined Jim's pressing invitation to visit Mrs. Murphy. He didn't see he could do any good and felt that he wouldn't in the very

least know what to say to her. His domain, as he was wont to express it, stopped with the male.

He entertained strong views on the subject of woman kind, being of opinion that the wrecks, if not all her deed, were largly attributed to her influence, wherein he was doubtless wrong, though it is curious what a number of adherents these and similar beliefs of the heterodox order command amongst members of the opposite sex; mostly bachelors, poor things, whose knowlege of women, compared with that possessed by married men, does'nt really amount to the proverbial row of beans.

As a matter of fact Armitage when he met Jim hadn't the smallest intention of going to Victoria. His visit to the shipping office had been undertaken with a view of enquiring about a steamer to Japan, his idea being to take in that interesting country on his way home. But the rich man may, simply because he can, change his mind with even greater impunity than a wise one. This is where the well-to-do and independent have such an enormous advantage over us poor struggling mortals on the salary list, whose aspirations and desires, not to mention our families, are so lamentably disproportioned to our means. You rich men, with all the greater ease, should happen

to be untrammelled by the seductive chains of matrimony, says, on the Monday: "Of a truth my little body is aweary of this excessively uninteresting place or people, I will hie me elsewhere." And on the morrow or at latest the next day he hies him to China or Peru, to Spain or Timbuctoo, leaving nothing but envy behind in the hearts of his unfortunate brethern who are less liberally endowed with the powers of changing their environment. Not that the capacity for enjoyment lies solely in your bank—by no manner of means—many other attributes are necessary, as those of us who may have attained their fortieth birthday and are married—I must make that proviso—are perfectly well aware, but though you may "resolute till the cows come home" there is absolutely no getting over the fact that a surplus over and above your actual requirements, whether it partake of the nature of the unearned increment or not, is one of the most important factors, under existing conditions, in the sum of human happiness. I will further go to the extent of saying that its utility when administered in theory by those who do not possess it is invariably greater than when expended in practice by those who do.

All the money in the world is in the wrong hands.

What couldn't you and I do with Podkin's wealth, my dear reader? He doesn't in the least know how to spend it; doesn't extract one quarter the enjoyment out of it that you or I would. He's a fool is Podkins, anyway, though his folly, be it remarked, consists mostly in the fact that he has what we haven't. But Armitage wasn't a fool; he had his hobbies like the rest of us, one of which was an insane idea that he could do some good in the world. His wealth too was a serious responsibility according to his benighted views, and he looked upon poverty and crime as effects, not causes. A most eccentric person; you never knew what he was going to do next. Some of his aristocratic connections in England were quite nervous about asking him to dine unless they were "quite alone" (on these charmingly intimate occasions when the hostess hasn't the smallest idea what the cook is going to give you for dinner—may she be forgiven—I mean the hostess not the cook). He had an awkward knack of putting matters in a painfully direct light, and of introducing subjects into conversation which were not usually alluded to in refined society.

Jim Fink however knew nothing of these drawbacks in Armitage's character, and even if he had

it is probable that he would have taken passage with him to Victoria all the same.

To change his destination from Yokohama to Victoria at a second's notice was as nothing to Armitage. Had he been steering due south he would have veered round and pointed due north with the same alacrity did the fancy move him, or if he thought by so doing he could do any one a good turn. Jim was in trouble, was probably not over-burdened with cash and Armitage felt he could be of service, both as mentor and banker; that was enough inducement. One soul was as good as another to him and he knew no greater pleasure than that of assisting his fellow-creatures in difficulty. He had heard, too, recently from Uncle Bob asking him for Evan's news and saying that the little mother was pining for tidings of her eldest born, of whom she had heard nothing for over a year. It is not so long ago that people in England laboured under the pleasing delusion that people on the American continent saw each other every day, irrespective of locality or distance; that it was an afternoon's walk from Boston to Chicago, and that any one going to New York from Liverpool was absolutely sure to meet somebody else who had left the Old Country fifteen

years before for San Francisco and had not since been heard of. Much the same ideas prevail to-day with regard to the Dominion of Canada, and it is probable that the difference in the average Anglican mind between Prince Edward and Vancouver Islands is really not worth talking about. It was not unnatural therefore that the little mother should expect Armitage on the Atlantic coast to know all about Evan on the Pacific slope and make enquiries of her lost boy through him. As events proved, her motherly instinct was not altogether at fault.

Half an hour after their arival at Victoria poor Jim knew the worst. He met one of the *Saratoga's* passengers whom he had known in 'Frisco, the same miner who had given Evan a pull out of his whiskey bottle.

"Hello!" said the miner; "Jim Fink, what the blazes are you doing up here—going to the diggings? Have a drink?" and they turned into a bar.

Jim said he didn't hardly know what he was going to do; he was with his friend here (indicating Armitage) and they were going to have a look round before deciding on anything. He didn't happen to know what had become of Evans, a

Britisher, who had come up by the *Saratoga*, did he?

This was just what the miner did know and was only too ready to communicate. He poured out all the story of Martha's suicide, the enquiry of the captain on board, the evidence of the half-breed and the excitment the incident had caused on board, never noticing that one of his listeners leant an inert mass against the bar counter with a face as white as death and that the other stood watching him intently as if fearful he would faint.

Armitage ordered the drinks to be replenished and engaged the miner in conversation so as to give Jim a chance to pull himself together. Fortunately several others came in and they were able to get away unobserved.

"We'll go to the orfice," said Jim in a husky voice, "and find out if it's true. I'm in a fog, that's what I am; this thing's broke me all up."

Armitage said nothing. Silence is your true sympathizer. At the shipping office they were told much the same story, and gathered the additional information that Evan had taken passage by the *Otter* for the mainland, on his way presumably to the mines.

"We'll go after him, Jim," said Armitage.

"You will like to see him and so shall I. It will be some consolation to you to hear exactly what happened from him, and I know he will be glad to see you."

"I'll go," said poor Jim, "I'll go anywheres with you, sir; it's all much of a muchness to me now what I do. But I can't understand what Mart robbed that till for if she meant to drown herself. It wasn't like Mart to do that. She was a level-headed gall as ever was before she fell in with Mr. Evans, and I can't make it out. It beats me clean and clever, that's what it does."

It beat Armitage too for that matter, but he didn't say so.

He let Jim do all the talking, knowing that if grief can find utterance in words it is better so.

The winter—a hard one—had already set in, and the prospect of a trip up country at this season of the year was not an alluring one. Communications between the coast and the mines were none too easy under the most favourable circumstances, and in the winter were frequently altogether interrupted. But the difficulty of the journey rather enhanced its attractions in Armitage's eyes, and he immediately set about equipping himself and Jim with a complete sporting out-

fit on the chances of their coming across big game in the mountains. This he did quite as much with a view of distracting Jim's attention as of ministering to his own enjoyment ; for though he was proficient at all field sports he scarcely came into the category of a keen sportsman.

Jim gradually woke up from his lethargy, and by the time they were ready to start, which was about ten days after their arrival, he was sufficiently himself again to take an interest in his surroundings. He wrote to Mrs. Murphy and told her all he had heard, in ignorance of course of the fact that Evan had written both to her and to him.

At Yale they learnt that Evan had come up about five weeks previously, accompanied by a half-breed, with a party of miners, and had pushed on to the mines after staying only one night. The same tidings greeted them at the stopping-places *en route* ; but great was their disappointment when, after a two months' journey, they arrived at Williams Creek to find that he had left the camp nearly a month previously on a trapping expedition in the mountains. The half-breed had gone with him, and no one seemed to know when they would be bac . Many of the miners

went trapping in the winter, no mining operations being possible during the severe weather.

Armitage had never been on a trapping expedition and suggested to Jim that they might as well turn the opportunity to account. Jim was quite willing; he was a fairly good trapper himself, having had two seasons in the Rockies down south after marten, and he told Armitage that there would be no necessity to take any one else with them.

Armitage thoroughly enjoyed the experience. He saw nature under a new aspect and realized for the first time what eternal silence meant. For days they travelled through the snow, visiting their traps—as often as not to find them broken into and spoilt, the martens abstracted by the trapper's implacable enemy, the wolverine—without seeing a sign of living creature save its tracks upon the snow.

Jim proved a first rate woodsman and initiated Armitage into the mystery of making and setting traps, which are as simple as they are efficient. But the marten is only valuable from one point of view, the furrier's; from every other and particularly a culinary aspect he is an execrable beast, and after about three weeks of hunter's fare

Armitage began to pine after a more varied *menu* than Jim with all his good will was able to afford him. They therefore decided they would make tracks for camp.

That night as they lay wrapped in their blankets literally between two fires—for the cold was intense—Jim poured out his heart to Armitage as he had never done before. He told him of his deep love for the girl through the long years of waiting, his hope that she would still care for him, up to the time of Evan's arrival; of his feelings when he and she together rescued him from the incoming tide: how he had foreseen in a single moment as it were so much of what had subsequently happened; and Armitage listened to the old, old story of man's love for woman, beautiful even though it treated of no more exalted personages than an ex-costermonger and a barkeeper's daughter.

All of a sudden Jim stopped.

"Go on, Jim," said Armitage, "I can hear you"—but Jim made no reply.

Armitage turned round in his blanket on the snow and then leaped to his feet horror-striken at the look on Jim's face. His eyes were starting out of his head with terror.

"Look! look!" he said in an awed whisper, "there's Mart."

Jim was staring straight up into the smoke which curled in festoons from the camp fire.

"All right, old man, all right, I'm here," said Armitage, thinking that he was either dreaming or delirious.

"I saw her, so help me God I did," said Jim still in an awed whisper. "There she is again," and he pointed straight above him as Armitage thought into the column of smoke. "She's smiling at me."

"Nonsense," said the latter, who could see nothing. "Get up, man, and walk about a bit; help me put another log on the fire, it's getting low"—and he dragged him on to his feet.

Together they replenished the waning fire and Armitage insisted that Jim should change places with him, thinking possibly that in the glow of the firelight some bow or knot on the tree above him had assumed a resemblance to a human face in which he had seen some likeness to Martha. It was not unnatural, he argued to himself. They had been talking about the girl and fancy plays extraordinary tricks with us all at times.

Armitage did not laugh at him, for he saw by

the expression on his face that he regarded the occurance as no laughing matter.

Jim before settling down again went on a voyage of discovery, but the night was a dark one and a few feet away from the fire in the shadow nothing was discernable.

Jim lay down and Armiage tried to turn the current of his thoughts by talking to him of other subjects, and finally he went off to sleep. But Armitage in the place recently occupied by Jim lay awake and reflected on the weakness of human intellect which allowed itself so easily to be wrought upon by imagination. As, however, he gazed upwards through the smoke the uneasy feeling came over him, that he too was suffering from the same hallucination which had affected Jim, for he fancied he caught sight now and again of a face looking down at him with a smile, though whether it was that of a woman or not the momentary glimpses he got of it rendered it impossible to say. He rubbed his eyes and felt quite annoyed with himself for giving way to fancy. Then he closed them and turned over on his side for a minute or two, but when he resumed his former position he saw the same thing again, so distinctly this time that there was no mistaking

it. It was a face with fixed smile and staring eyes gazing right into his own—of that there could be no shadow of doubt. He got up and stepping over Jim, who moaned uneasily in his sleep but did not wake, he piled several logs from the store they had cut on the fire in the hope of throwing light upon the mystery. He walked round the tree, a tall pine, at the foot of which they had camped but could see nothing in the darkness. As however the flames mounted he caught sight of more than a face, he saw the head and shoulders of a human body with an arm thrown round the bough on which it rested as if for support, and he noticed that the clothes it wore were as those of an Indian half-breed. Despite himself Armitage breathed more freely. There was a human being alive or dead up the tree and there was nothing supernatural about the apparition. A moment's reflection brought him to the conclusion that it could not by any possibility, owing to the intense cold, be alive, and that consequently it must be frozen solid. But how had it got there? This was a question which puzzled Armitage mightily, though he would not wake Jim to help him to unravel the mystery. It could do no good and would only spoil his rest;

besides he rather enjoyed thinking out problems alone. Insensibly, now that he had determined that the body in the tree was that of a half-breed, he connected the extraordinary discovery with Evan Evans, for the latter had left Victoria in company with a half-breed Indian who, as they had afterwards learnt, had accompanied him up country to the mining camps and thence on his trapping expedition. It was quite possible that the body was Evan's half-breed, though how and why it came to occupy its present position Armitage was at a loss to imagine. Again, why should Jim declare that he had seen Martha? Then Armitage had an inspiration, which burst upon him like a flash. The result of it was that he determined then and there that Jim must not see the body again, as he infallibly would if they waited till morning to break camp. He would make the excuse that he too had dreamt visions and seen sights and felt inclined to move on. So he got up to wake Jim, trusting that he would not be too importunate in his enquiries or insist on making further investigations.

He called out, "Here, Jim, wake up," but Jim made no reply. Knowing him to be a sound sleeper, Armitage was not greatly surprised, but

he felt a horrible sinking feeling as he pushed the recumbent figure by the shoulder and found that it simply rolled over in the snow. He turned it round and looked at the face. He tried to feel if the heart still beat, but there was no pulsation to be felt, through the thickness of Jim's fur coat and his own mit. He pulled the body round to the fire and examined it, knowing full well—though he knew not why—that faithful Jim Fink had passed beyond his own or other mortal's aid. Jim laid dead at his feet with a placid smile upon his face—dead of heart disease, Armitage supposed, though he could only surmise—with Martha's name upon his lips and Martha's image in his heart; and when Armitage, with a terrible choky feeling in his throat, gazed upwards he saw that the half-breed Indian athwart the bow in the pine tree overhead was looking down upon them as if in tacit approval.

The hours though there was only four of them till daylight, seemed interminable, and Armitage never forgot as long as he lived that night of watching by the dead in the pine forest. Fortunately the supply of wood lasted out, and he sat up constantly replenishing the fire until dawn, by which time he had made up his mind what he had

to do. He would have to get Jim's body up the tree, even as the half-breed's was to save it from being devoured by the wolverine which, as he knew, had followed their tracks for days and was even now, he felt sure, within but a few yards of the camp.

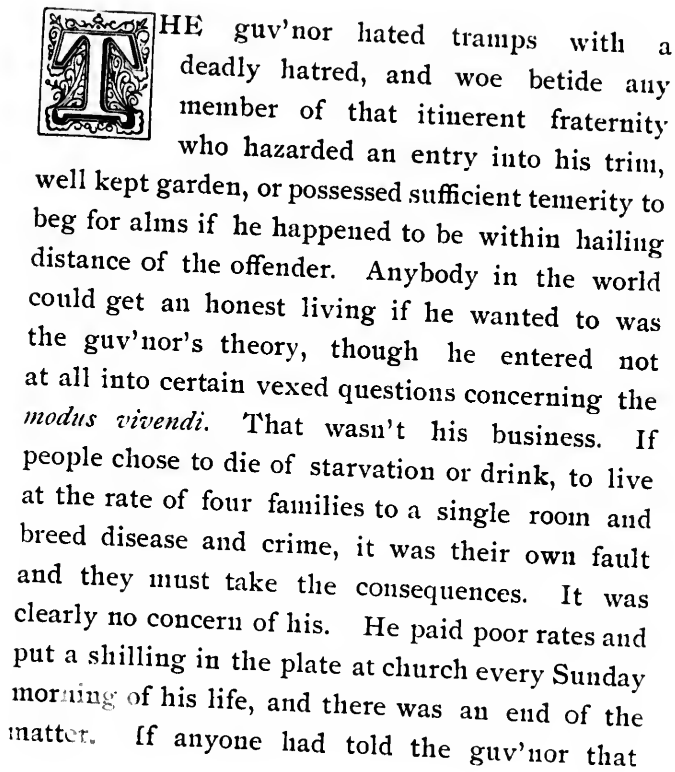
When daylight came Armitage could see the body of the half-breed plainly enough. It was resting with its feet against the trunk of the tree along the main bough, one arm thrown half-round it and its face peering downwards, having evidently been placed in its position with great care and tenderness. Armitage found that some steps had been cut in the tree and these greatly facilitated him in mounting. Fortunately too he had acquired the habit during his residence in Eastern climes of wearing a silk *cumberbund*, which was of several yards in length and of great strength. By using this as a rope, which he tied round poor Jim's body, and a sort of scaffolding of young pines, which he used as props against the tree, he succeeded after great difficulty in hauling it up on to the bough next to that whereon the body of the half-breed lay, and placing it in such a position as to prevent the possibility of its falling down. He took Jim's knife as a souvenir and

then made ready to start on his two days' tramp into the mining camp, never doubting that he should get there, though it was his first experience of travelling in the woods in winter alone.

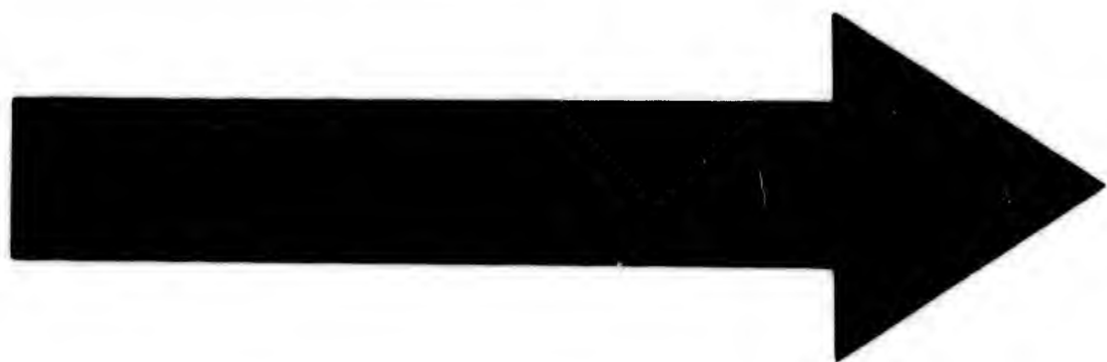
As he turned to look at the tree for the last time he murmured to himself.

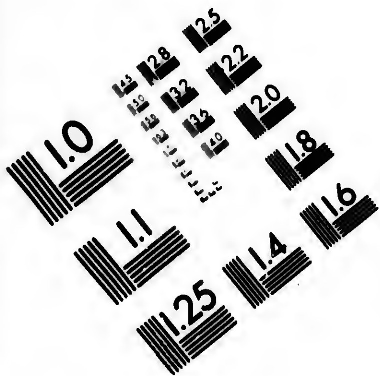
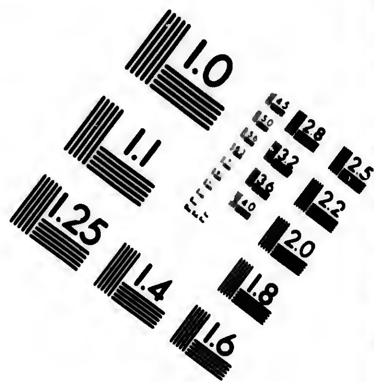
"Were they lovely and pleasant in their lives, I wonder? One thought the other was, I know; at any rate, in their death they are not divided."

CHAPTER XVII.



THE guv'nor hated tramps with a deadly hatred, and woe betide any member of that itinerent fraternity who hazarded an entry into his trim, well kept garden, or possessed sufficient temerity to beg for alms if he happened to be within hailing distance of the offender. Anybody in the world could get an honest living if he wanted to was the guv'nor's theory, though he entered not at all into certain vexed questions concerning the *modus vivendi*. That wasn't his business. If people chose to die of starvation or drink, to live at the rate of four families to a single room and breed disease and crime, it was their own fault and they must take the consequences. It was clearly no concern of his. He paid poor rates and put a shilling in the plate at church every Sunday morning of his life, and there was an end of the matter. If anyone had told the guv'nor that



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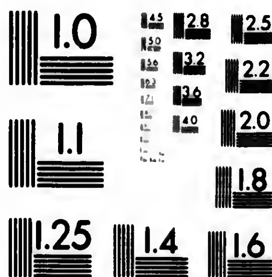
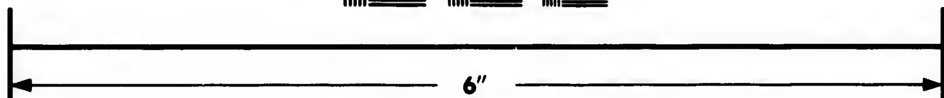

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there were ways of practising the virtue known as Christian charity other than the methods he resorted to he would have been very much astonished, but he would not have believed the assertion, and the probabilities are that the majority would have agreed with him.

This however was away back in the dark ages of thirty years ago, and it is extremely gratifying to reflect that the number who think differently now-a-days must have increased, making due allowance for the difference in population, by at least as much as a sixteenth of one per cent.

The guv'nor regarded men of the stamp of Armitage who busied themselves about the affairs of their fellow men, and sought to determine the cause of the conditions under which they lived with a view to remove or ameliorate it, as fit occupants for a lunatic asylum, and Armitage, likely enough, entertained precisely the same views about the guv'nor and *id genus omne.*

So the world wags in this and other particulars, but on the morning upon which this chapter opens it wagged not at all to the guv'nor's liking, for just as he turned the corner at which he caught his daily 'bus, he cannoned right into an individual who from his appearance, gaunt, thin, travel-

stained and ragged, could only belong to the class which his soul abhorred. The tramp raised his tattered hat a great deal too politely to please the gov'nor.

"Confound you, sir, why don't you look where you are going?" but for all answer the tramp eyed him narrowly and passed on.

The guv'nor was in a dilemma. The lane led to but one house and that was his own. Consequently the tramp—unless he was ignorant of the locality, an impossible assumption, for tramps, according to the guv'nor, know all localities—could be going nowhere else. His 'bus was only about a hundred yards off, yet he felt sorely tempted to risk losing it if but to give that fellow a lesson for his impertinence. Habit however prevailed, and he contented himself with calling out—

"Hie! you there. There's no thoroughfare this way, and you'll get nothing at that house let me tell you. I'll give you in charge if I catch you begging there."

The tramp, who though he limped in his walk, was by this time half way down the lane, stopped for a moment irresolutely. Then he slowly retraced his steps, much to the guv'nor's satisfac-

tion, who recounted the incident with infinite gusto to his fellow passengers of twenty years' standing, all of whom, by the way, shared his opinion on the subject of tramps.

But possibly the guv'nor did not observe that the very instant he had taken his seat the tramp turned round again and made straight for the house he had been warned against. At any rate if he did he said nothing about it to his fellow passengers.

The latch to the gate had no handle on the outside—a precaution of the guv'nor's against intrusion of this very nature. Yet the man seemed to experience little difficulty in opening it. Put up to the secret no doubt by other disreputable characters whose sole aim in life was to cherish and execute, if opportunity only offered, nefarious designs against the guv'nor's portable property.

Esther, the only one at home, making the bed in her mother's room, heard the click of the gate and saw a strange man coming up the path. She wondered how in the world he had managed to get inside, and the vision of her father's wrath had he only been there to see, as he would have been ten minutes earlier, rose up before her mind.

It was roughly dispelled by a loud knock on the

door so like Uncle Bob's that she wondered the more, and the next moment she was flying down-stairs with her heart in her mouth, for a scream had rung through the house followed by a dull thud *come corpo morte cade.*

The little mother was lying prone upon the floor of the hall, and over her leaned the man whom Ester recognized as the tramp she had seen in the garden.

She flew at him like a tigress.

"How dare you," she began, but she stopped short as the man raised his face to hers, for she knew that Evan had come back.

This then was the home-coming for which they had looked so long.

She flung her arms round his neck and in her loving welcome Evan almost forgot his meeting with his father.

Between them they raised the little mother and carried her to a sofa. Esther's heart sank when she saw how thin and ill Evan was, and noticed in lifting her mother that she seemed to have far more strength than he had.

Soon the little mother came to, and her joy at seeing her boy again was beautiful to behold. But he needed attention far more than she did.

His voice was almost gone, and he looked, as indeed he was, frightfully ill.

"I'll have to get to bed, little mother," he said, after a bit. (They had not plied him with questions, for their hearts were too full to talk.) "I'm feeling pretty bad. I won't stay here though. I'll go to Uncle Bob's."

But even had they been willing to let him go he very soon had to admit that he was too ill to move, and with the utmost difficulty they got him upstairs and put him to bed. Then Esther dispatched the maid for Uncle Bob, who, save for the difierence engendered by an occasional twinge of gout, was the same cheery, helpful personage as of yore. His sister leaned on Esther and him almost entirely now, Miss Miriam having long since withdrawn her support. She was now the mainstay of the Reverend Septimus McGillicuddy—the man with the awful name as the boys called him. Under the disguise of doing her duty Mrs. McGillicuddy made things as uncomfortable for her husband's parishioners as she had ever done for her brothers at home. In fact she "bossed the show," and cared not now who knew it. All this was entirely Armitage's fault. He might have had the fair Miriam for the asking, but he never came to

claim his rights, and the Reverend Septimus had a walk-over up to the time of the marriage ceremony, after which the operation was reversed, as frequently happens, though indeed in fairness it must be admitted the rule works usually in the opposite direction.

They thought Uncle Bob would never come. When he did it was in company with the doctor; for though they had not told him that Evan was ill, he had cross-examined the maid and had come to the conclusion from her description that medical advice would be needed, and that speedily. After the examination Uncle Bob took the doctor aside, but had no need to cross-examine him. He saw in his face that Evan's doom was sealed.

"Good God!" said Uncle Bob, whose first thought was for his sister, "It will break his mother's heart."

"Both lungs gone," said the doctor; "I don't really know how he's managed to live so long. He may last a day or two, but I doubt it. I'll send him some medicine, but it won't do him any good," and the docter took his departure, leaving Uncle Bob to break the news to the little mother and Esther. How to tell them he did not know. He walked down to the gate with the doctor,

more to gain time than anything else, for strong men will temporize on occasion as well as weak ones, and he caught at any chance of postponing the evil moment. At the gate he met Marshall, his marine servant, with a note.

"From Lord Armitage," said the one-armed, with all possible respect; "His lordship is waiting at the cottage, sir, for an answer; he arrived in a 'ansom, sir, just two minutes after you had left."

Uncle Bob tore it open. "My dear Rolston," it ran, "I've been tracking Evan for months, and actually crossed the Atlantic in the same steamer with him without knowing it, to my inexpressible regret—I in the saloon, he in the steerage, poor fellow. I only found it out by accident while in Liverpool, where I stayed for a week on one of my fads, which might just as well have kept for a year. I came on here immediately on my arrival in the hope that you might have news of him, and now learn from Marshall, who remembers me I'm glad to say, that he turned up only this morning, very ill. I naturally don't want to intrude upon you all, but I'm longing to see you and him. Let me know how things are."

"Bring Lord Armitage over here," was the

captain's reply. "Tell him Mr. Evans is very ill, and that I can't leave or would come over to see him."

Then he went upstairs to find Esther standing outside the door of Evan's room.

"'Oh, Uncle Bob!" she began, but her enquiries too were needless, for one look at her uncle's face told her the truth. He took both her hands in his and they remained silent for a moment or two.

"He says so himself," she said, in a soft voice, "he told mother and me while you were talking to the doctor. He said, 'Little mother, there's not much of me left. I've had a rough time of it lately, but I'm glad to die at home. I never thought I'd get here.' Just fancy, the poor darling walked all the way from Liverpool. He had no money and would not write to any of us, not even to you."

"How did your mother take it?" asked Uncle Bob.

"Mother took it splendidly," answered Esther; "I never thought she could be so brave, but I don't think she realizes it really. I'm sure she doesn't know how bad he is. He wants to see you, Uncle Bob; he's asked for you several times."

Nature has her own anæsthetics. She discovered them long before the doctors, and the most merciful of them all is the semi-torpor to which she lulls the human mind in preparation for its keenest pain.

A glance sufficed to show Uncle Bob that Esther was right. The little mother was busying herself about woman's noblest office—the care of her sick—just as if Evan had never left home and was a boy again. Uncle Bob felt that it was better so.

Evan held out a thin hand—nothing but skin and bone—to Uncle Bob.

"Tell me about all of them," he said, almost in a whisper; "I can't talk loud, but I want to hear," and they told him the family news since their last letters—of Miriam's marriage, at which he smiled; how Janet was at school, and the boys all out in the world doing well; but they did not mention his father. Evan did.

"Glad the guv'nor's all right," he said; "I met him in the lane this morning, but I didn't speak to him. He thought I was a tramp, as you did, Ettie, but I didn't ask him for a copper," and he looked at Uncle Bob, who understood the allusion. So did the little

mother, who went out of the room.

"Evan darling," said Esther, taking advantage of her mother's absence and true to her creed, "wouldn't you like to see a clergyman?"

"No," answered Evan, "I don't want to see a parson. There's only one man I want to see except Uncle Bob, and there's no chance of that."

Uncle Bob guessed and felt glad, but Esther asked, "Who is it? Tell me Evan."

"Armitage," answered Evan? "I'd like to have a word with him. He's a sensible chap."

"He's here," said Uncle Bob; "he arrived this morning; he's coming to see you."

Ester looked astonished, but raised her eyes in mute thankfulness.

Evan merely said, "I'm very glad" and turned his head upon his pillow. Just then the bell rang.

"If that's Armitage, ask him to come up, will you, Uncle Bob? and you come too."

Esther understood, and as Uncle Bob came up with Evan's friend, she slipped out to comfort her mother.

"I'm awfully glad you've come," he said; I was just asking for you. I'm going out fast and I'd like you to talk to me as you used to in New York before I went West. But first tell me what

you've been doing since I last heard from you. Did you go to the diggings, as you said you thought of doing?"

Then Armitage told him how he'd met Jim Fink in 'Frisco and how together they had journeyed to British Columbia in search of him.

Evan's eyes filled with tears and he pressed Armitage's hand.

"That was good of you, old chap," he said. "Go on, tell me everything; I like to hear." He did not interrupt him again till he had finished his story, but lay perfectly still with his eyes fixed upon his friend's face.

"I can't tell you how thankful I feel," he said, "that dear old Jim didn't know the truth. He would have found it hard to believe I didn't go back on him, but I didn't—I didn't, really, Armitage. Will you believe it, she was with me from the time we left Victoria—up at the mining camp—nearly three months. We were in the woods together trapping for more than a week and I never guessed it. Nobody else did, either. She worked for me like a slave at the mines, looked after me like a mother, sister and servant rolled into one, and all the time I took her for the half-breed Indian Tom. She scarcely ever spoke and

never gave herself away by look or deed until one night when we were sitting by the camp fire, just as you say Jim and you were. She said quite quietly and in her natural voice, 'Don't you know me, Mr. Evan?"

A terrible paroxysm of coughing stopped Evan's recital and brought his mother and sister rushing into the room. He was much exhausted, but after lying quiet for some time he motioned them out again, and continued, though in a much weaker voice—

"I was hard on her, God forgive me. All she had gone through and the wrong she had done for love of a man who didn't care two straws about her never even occurred to me till afterwards. She confessed everything—how she had robbed her father's till and bought the half-breed's dress in the town that after-noon; how she had planned the suicide racket, even to taking some stones on board to make sure her bundle of clothes would sink; how she'd written the letter to me, thinking, poor girl, to secure my interest in her *protege;* that she did in the house before she left, so the whole thing was carefully thought out, you see. Wonderful, wasn't it? And yet, as I said, her devotion never struck me till afterwards, when it

was too late. I was hard to her, and Armitage, do you know, I think it killed her. That's what has broken me up. I could have got over the effects of exposure easily enough but for that. I vowed I wouldn't speak to her and I didn't. It was just like me—just like the guv'nor. I told her that night that she'd forfeited my respect and that the only thing we could do was to make tracks for the camp again as quickly as we could, and that she must go back to 'Frisco as soon as I could get her down to the coast. She never said anything, but her face has haunted me ever since. On the fourth night I woke up suddenly. She was leaning over me. 'Let me see your face, Mr. Evan, won't you?' she said; but I pushed her away and turned round in my blankets. The next morning I found her lying dead just as you found Jim, and I got her body up the tree to save it from the wolverine—the same wolverine I'll lay odds, that spoilt your traps too. I got down to another camp; I didn't want to be asked any questions; but I had a terrible time through the mountains; that's where I got this lung trouble, and—

He stopped utterly exhausted and gradually fell into a doze. They stayed with him and did all

they could to ease his cough, which was incessant. Towards evening he seemed rather better and the little mother's heart felt lighter, though Esther and the others knew that it was but the last faint flicker of the waning light.

As the clock struck six the guv'nor's latch-key grated in the lock. Evan opened his eyes.

"That's the guv'nor," he said; "call him now; I'd like to see him."

Esther ran to the top of the stairs. "Father, father, oh, come quickly! Evan is dying and has asked for you."

The old man put his hand to his head. "Evan dying—what?" but he asked no more, and came straight upstairs with his mind filled with the vision of the tramp he had spoken to so roughly that morning. As he entered the room Evan raised himself up in bed and cried "Dad, I'm sorry —— ——"

Then there was mourning in the house of Evans for many days.

[THE END.]