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# ll Gets a Move On

MARIE VAN BRANDEL



BILL GETS A MOVE ON



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# Bill Gets a Move On

*By* MARIE VAN BRAKKEL

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# BILL GETS A MOVE ON

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## Chapter I.

Bill was lazy. Bone lazy. For two years he had not worked, or wished to; not because he was an invalid, but simply that he had drifted into idleness through the love and care of an over indulgent wife. Sarah was a thin, cheerful little woman, quick in movement and speech. She adored her big husband. Her home was her pride. Everything in it was spotlessly clean. Her cooking, something to remember.

Two months after their arrival, Bill took ill with influenza. He was ill, very ill. Poor Sarah thought she was going to lose him, but he rallied, though it was some time before he gained sufficient strength to sit up. In the meantime funds were horribly low. The balance of the furniture time payment bills were due, but there was no money to meet them. Things were looking very serious indeed. Sarah was secretly worrying. It was no use to burden Bill with money troubles as he was still very weak. Besides, ever since they were married, Bill had given her nearly all his wages, only reserving sufficient for his fares, paper and tobacco. He did not touch alcohol simply because it did not agree with him.

Things looked at their blackest the day that a neighbor greeted Sarah with:

"An' 'ow are yer, Mrs. 'Arris, an' 'ow's yer 'usband? My, an' its a long time since 'e's bin bad. It's about time 'e was up an' doin'. If 'e was my 'usband I'd 'ave 'ad 'im up long afore this."

"He's much better, thank you," answered Sarah briefly, anxious to get home.

"Wite jist a minut 'till I tell yer about that there Mrs. Ellis at the corner 'ouse, 'er as I do the washin' for," continued the neighbor, catching hold of Sarah's sleeve.

"Larst Monday, I got there a bit late, when me lady walks inter the washus an' ses: 'Yer late agin Mrs. Forum.' I ses: 'I am, an' yer lucky ter see me at all, for me 'ead's achin' crool bad. Its rest I be wantin,' an' not a 'eap o' washin' fer a lot o' partickler people.' With that me lady up an' ses ter me: 'If the washin' don't look better than it did larst week, yer needn't come agin.'

'Ho!' I ses, jest like that, as quick as lightnin.' 'So that's it, is it? Well then, I want ter tell yer that I don't want ter do yer bloomin' washin' with yer 'Rinse them close properly please, Mrs. Forum, an', 'don't put too much blue in them whites.'

"I got that 'ot, I jist told 'er what I thought uv 'er. Me that's washed for the best uv 'ouses, so to speak, an' me with a big fambly ter keep. So I puts me 'at on me 'ead, picks up me 'amper with me drop o' somethin' in it ter keep me goin' as it were durin' the mornin', an'—I snaps me fingers in 'er fice—"That's ter yer," I ses, an' turns me back on 'er, an' marches off. No good ter me them partickler women that's allus watchin' yer."

"You'll excuse me," interrupted Sarah, "but I must hurry away. I've left my husband all alone, and I must get back to him."

"Ta, ta. That's more than I want ter. It's no wonder that a woman takes a drop o' somethin' now an' agin. Washin' an' 'usbins is enuf ter worry a poor woman in 'er grave, that they is."

Sarah did not wait to hear any more, but hur-

ried on. Gradually her footsteps slackened. She was thinking. Arriving, she found Bill fast asleep. Leaving some food on a table near at hand, Sarah crept softly from the house. Soon she found herself at the side gate of the big house at the corner. Quietly unlatching it, she swung it open, and hesitated. Then, with a determined air she walked to the back door. Timidly she knocked, and waited. After what seemed to her a long time, she knocked again. The door opened, and a tall, severe looking woman stood waiting for her to speak. Sarah opened her mouth, but could make no sound.

"What do you want?" she heard.

Sarah felt too nervous to speak.

"It's no use coming begging here. I've got nothing to give. People should work, not beg."

The very idea of being taken for a beggar restored Sarah's voice.

"I've not come to beg, thank you," she said quickly. "I heard you needed someone to do your washing."

Mrs. Ellis looked at Sarah, then made a movement to go inside.

Sarah gave a little cry. "Please don't go. I do want work, and I'll show you how nicely I can wash."

Mrs. Ellis hesitated, then said: "Wash! What nonsense! Why you are only a child."

Sarah hurriedly replied: "Oh no, I'm not. I have been married just three years, and I do all my own washing and ironing."

"Where is your husband then? Surely he ought to be able to keep a little thing like you, without you going out by the day."

Sarah answered: "My husband has been very ill, and not able to work."

Mrs. Ellis gave an impatient toss to her head, saying: "The same old tale; always the husband sick. No! No! I can't believe that."

Tears filled Sarah's eyes. "Please, it's true. He's been so bad I thought I'd lose him, and now we're short of money, I thought I would try and see if I could earn enough to keep us going 'til he was strong enough to get back to work."

Mrs. Ellis opened wide the door. "Come in," she said, "and I will see how you get on."

Sarah followed her to the washhouse and listened in silence to the many directions given her. Mrs. Ellis finished with "What price are you asking for half a day's work?"

Sarah looked at the severe face and replied softly "Please I will leave that to you."

Mrs. Ellis glanced sharply at her companion. "It's rather unusual, but I'll see."

During the two busy hours that followed Mrs. Ellis overlooked the work, once demanding that the article should be rewashed. Sarah complied in silence. Within the two hours Sarah had considerably reduced the pile of clothes before her.

The housemaid's request of "Tea's ready" brought a welcome relief to Sarah's tired body.

As she seated herself at the kitchen table, the housemaid asked,

Well, 'ow did yer git on with 'er?" with a backward jerk of the thumb and head in the  
BILL—TWO

direction of the closed door. "She's a bit uv a tartar orlright, keeps me well up to the mark I can tell yer."

Sarah looked at the speaker and quietly said: "I got on alright."

"What's yer name?" she asked. Not waiting for a reply continued: "Mine's Vilet May. Yer see, me mother used ter go a lot to the theayter in the old country, and she used to see a lot uv Edna May the actress, an' she allus 'ad a bunch, leastways not a bunch, but a few vilets in 'er 'and, the real ones when she cud



git 'em, an' when she couldn't she'd tike 'em out uv 'er 'at, an' sprinkle a few drops of scent so as to make 'em smell nice. Me mother was a real lidy she was, allus knew 'ow ter be'ave. Me father was a bit uv a rough'un, but me mother brought us up real well."

As Sarah did not make any comment, Violet May resumed: "'Ave another cup o' tea, do. Ter give 'er 'er doo, she ain't a bit mean with ther vittals, but mind yer, she's a sharp un, gits 'er work done 'er wiy, an' won't stand no nonsense. Only the other diy I ses to 'er: 'Mrs. Ellis,' I ses, 'I wasn't brought up ter work like a slive,' an' what do yer think she ses? 'Jones,' she ses, jist like that, 'I don't think you've been brought up ter work at all.' 'No,' I ses, 'my mother was a lidy that come from a good fam-bly, an' she wouldn't let us work nun.' 'What rubbish," ses Mrs. Ellis, 'the biggest lady in the land works.' I didn't answer 'er nun, but I 'ad me thoughts."

"Excuse me," said Sarah. "I must get back to work. I want to get finished as soon as I can."

"Well, there's one thing I likes about the missus, as soon as yer dun, that's the end of it. She's not allus rakin' up bits o' things ter do."

Violet May looked after Sarah as she resumed her work. "Not much change out o' 'er, I'm afraid. Looks ter me like one o' them close mouth'uns."

When Sarah had nearly finished, Mrs. Ellis appeared. "I am pleased with the way in which you wash. Can you come to-morrow, Mrs. er—?" she paused.

"Harris," supplied Sarah. "I will be glad to do so."

Mrs. Ellis looking keenly at the young woman handed her some money. Sarah took it.

"Thank you," she said earnestly. "It is more than I expected."

"Well, you did your work quickly and thoroughly, and without a lot of needless chatter. That is all I require. Now have your dinner."

"No thank you, I would rather go home," replied Sarah.

"Please yourself," replied Mrs. Ellis. "Good afternoon."

Sarah hurried home, tired, but happy to think that she could find sufficient work to bring in a few shillings until Bill was able to work again, and also to know that her first attempt had given complete satisfaction. She liked Mrs. Ellis.

Bill was fast asleep when she arrived. Early he had awakened and ate the food she had left by his side, and again went peacefully to sleep. Sarah bent over and kissed him softly.

As soon as Bill awoke she told him of her doings.

"Sally, old girl," said Bill, "you're one of the best. It won't take me long to get back again. I'm getting better every day."

"You're not to hurry, Bill. While I'm able to work I don't mind in the least. All I want is to see you get your old self again."

## Chapter II.

On the morrow, Sarah hurried with her work, left Bill well supplied with reading matter, tobacco, and his beloved pipe, and also a dainty meal near at hand.

"Come in," called Violet May in answer to her knock. "I guessed it was you. You're a early bird, alright. The missus, she aint up fer a wonder. She's got one uv 'er billyus attacks an' it keeps 'er in bed, thank the Lord."

"Did Mrs. Ellis leave word what work I had to do?" asked Sarah.

"Did she wot? I shud think she did. The larst words she spoke ter me larst night was: 'When Mrs. 'Arris comes termorrow, give 'er the ironing ter do.' I ses ter meself—thank Gawd fer that, fer if there's anything I 'ates, 'tis ironin.' She's that pertickler with it too; must 'ave the lace pulled out an' all that sort uv thing. Sich rubbish I calls it."

"Will you kindly show me where the things are, and let me get on," said Sarah.

"Ho yus! but it's no good tryin' ter bustle me. I'm no good if I 'ave ter bustle."

Sarah waited patiently while Violet May produced the clothes and board. She conducted Sarah to the cupboard and pointed to an electric iron.

"That's the blessed thing I'm afraid of. I 'ad it in me 'and one diy, an' was ironin' a blouse when all uv a suddent it went S-S-S- an' nearly burnt the 'and orf me. I giv' a yell an' dropped the thing fair on me foot. I yelled worse'n ever. The missus ran out, an' when she saw it with the 'andle broke, she went orf pop. Didn't think a thing about me 'and bein' burnt orf, and me foot smashed ter bits. No; all she ses

was: 'Stop ollerin', you're not 'urt.' An' when I comes ter look, I wasn't reely 'urt, but the fright nearly killed me."

Sarah did not wait to hear anything further, but carried the iron and other things into the washhouse and closed the door. Violet May was deeply offended. As she gazed at the closed door she tossed her head and murmured: "Well, I like that. H-n- the idea. Me a proper 'ousemaid, so ter speak, an' she only goin' out be the diy. I'll see me chin drop down, afore I speak to 'er agen. With 'er airs an' grices."

Sarah continued to work swiftly and well, taking pride in the appearance of the dainty linen. Two hours later, Mrs. Ellis appeared looking white and ill.

"Good morning, Mrs. Ellis," said Sarah. "I am sorry you are ill."

"Thank you, I feel much better now," she replied, and examined some of the work done.

"I am glad to find you are a careful worker, and do not tear the lace. My daughter needs some work of this kind done, but she lives some distance away. Could you go to her?"

"No," replied Sarah. "I can't leave my husband very long, but if you would trust me, I would take the things home, wash and iron them and return them to you."

"Yes," returned Mrs. Ellis thoughtfully, "I feel sure I can. Where do you live? Sarah gave the address. "Now have your morning tea and finish as soon as you wish. Call here for my daughter's things to-morrow morning, and return them at your earliest. I am very pleased with your work."

Sarah smiled at the praise, and said, "Thank you," when Mrs. Ellis placed some money on the table beside her.

Some time later Violet May opened the door



and in a very haughty manner said, "Yer tea's on the table. Ye'd better come at onc'st, else it'll git cold."

Sarah immediately complied. After she had eagerly drunk the tea, she held out her cup for it to be refilled, saying, "Oh! that was good." She sighed. "You make a good cup of tea, Violet."

Violet May tried hard to resist Sarah's winsome face with its pretty smile, but nature endowed her with a talkative disposition, and she dearly loved to hear her own voice.

"Yus, I does make a good cup uv tea, even though I ses it as shouldn't. An' as I ses before that's one thing I like about the missus, she 'asn't a stingy bone in 'er body. She allus gives me full an' plenty. Not that I wastes a bit, oh dear no, that aint my style, but as I ses before, I likes a good 'elpin. The larst plice I was in, they was that careful an' mincin' with the food I couldn't abear it, an' afore I left I told 'em so, too. The master was as bad as the missus. As soon as the meals was over 'e would come out an' siy: 'Gimme all them there pieces an' I'll tike 'em to the fowls.' Then 'e'd turn 'em over and siy, "Ere's a big bit uv meat. Who's plite 'as that come orf of?" Like as not it 'ud be master 'Energy's. 'E was a bit pernickerty with 'is food. I wouldn't siy a word, but 'e was as good as a witch! 'E would guess right awiy. Then 'e would dig it up with a fork, an' siy, 'Put that on master 'Energy's plite fer 'is tea.' An' I'd 'ave ter do it, too. I couldn't stand that plice fer long. Then I 'eard o' this plice. It's not too bad."

Sarah finished her work as quickly as she could, then hurried home to tell Bill of her doings and the additional work of the morrow. As she showed him the money she had earned, he caught sight of her right hand with a couple

of blisters on it. He picked it up and said: "Please God I'll soon be up an' about again. Those hands are not meant to work so hard." Then he kissed the blisters. All pain seemed to leave her hand. Sarah felt happy.

The next day she called about ten o'clock. Mrs. Ellis was out. Violet May handed her a large dress basket, saying: "Them's the things that Miss Mary brought over larst night. Won't cher come in an' sit down a bit?"

Sarah shook her head, saying: "No thank you, I'm in a hurry to get back."

"It seems ter me everybody's in a 'urry ter-diy. First I speaks ter the milkman; 'e don't answer, 'e never does, 'e's a gloomy cuss, 'e is. Then the baker calls an' ses, 'Ow many?' An' when I goes ter chip in a bit 'e ses, ' 'urry up, I can't wite 'ere all diy.' I 'as to answer 'im quick an' lively; an' now 'ere you are, can't wite a minut. I don't see as 'ow folks gits any-think out uv life with this 'urryin' business."

Sarah smiled at the worried expression on Violet May's face. "I'm sorry I can't wait today, but I really have to get home. I want to get on with this work," patting the basket. "Goodbye."

Violet May took the basket in her hand, saying: "Let me carry it ter the gite. I'm biggerer than you." And when they reached it, she added: "Would yer like me ter call round this afternoon an' give yer a 'and with it? I'll be dun me work be that time. It's no trouble." Sarah thanked her but refused the kind offer.

Sarah's day was full but happy. As she worked she sang softly to herself. It was late ere she had finished all she wished to do. The day seemed all too short.

Next morning she rose early, completed her own work, then folded the dainty linen into the

basket, tallied it with the list, and again carried it to the corner house.

Violet May opened the door. "Yer don't mean ter tell me yer dun all that there washin' already?" Sarah nodded, pleased at the amazement written on Violet May's face. "Well you're a marvel you are. Things fly when you're about an' no mistike about it."

Mrs. Ellis appeared.

"Good morning, Mrs. Harris. I see you have returned my daughter's clothes. Come in."

Sarah entered.

Mrs. Ellis then proceeded to examine the washing and compare it with the list. Turning to Sarah she said: "Give me your account, please."

Sarah replied: "I did not make one, for I did not know what to charge."

Mrs. Ellis opened a drawer. "Here," handing Sarah a paper, "is a laundry list. I will pay you the same prices, providing you send home the things as well washed as to-day. My trouble is to find a consistent worker, and one upon whose honesty I can rely. I have tried many private washers, but invariably I find my clothes have either been worn, or one or two articles are missing. I much prefer the personal linen to be washed privately. They last longer."

Sarah looked earnestly into the speaker's face as she said: "You may rely on my honesty, and I assure you I will never wear any of your clothes."

Mrs. Ellis smiled at the sweet little, earnest face. "I think I am right to trust you. I hope so, but I have been very often deceived."

Sarah replied: "You won't find me deceive you. You have been very kind to me. Thank you."

"Well, come again the two half days next

week, and there will be about the same quantity of my daughter's washing for some time. Also, if you can manage to take my other daughter's washing home, I will be pleased."

Sarah again thanked Mrs. Ellis and departed, jubilant.

The weeks passed swiftly in a succession of washing and ironing at home and at the corner house. Violet May and Sarah became excellent friends. Sarah soon realised that beneath Violet May's chattering manner, lay a heart of gold, and that she really was lonely. So few people understood her. Many times she would rise early and do as many of her duties as possible before Sarah would arrive, so as to give her a helping hand.

Mrs. Ellis, like a wise woman, ignored it, being quite content to have her work done so well without fuss and bother. Since Sarah had been coming to the house, Mrs. Ellis found many extra duties attended to, and also could not help noticing and appreciating the improvement in the cooking. She would often come to the washhouse and talk to Sarah while she was at her work.

As the weeks slipped by Bill went from bed to couch, then took to strolling for a walk. The doctor on his last visit mentioned heart trouble, which scared Sarah, especially during the first stage of convalescence. Bill would come in from a short walk with heart rapidly beating, and sudden noises would easily startle him. Sarah loved to pet and wait upon him.

Bill was grateful at first, then he took all her attentions as a matter of course. As for returning to work, he felt he couldn't. He did not feel strong enough.

Occasionally Mrs. Ellis would enquire: "Well, Sarah, how is your husband to-day?" The reply was invariably the same.



"He's a little better to-day, thank you."

"When is he returning to work?"

"Not yet; his heart's very bad."

"Mm. It's a long time bad."

The last time she enquired she said to Sarah: "Don't think I am interfering Sarah, but if you wish I will ask my doctor to see and examine your husband's heart, then it will put your mind at rest. Of course, it will not cost you anything."

"I would be grateful if you would, thank you, Mrs. Ellis," replied Sarah.

The doctor called and sounded Bill's heart and thumped him about the chest.

"Nothing the matter with your heart or lungs. Sound as a bell. You can return to work as soon as you like," was the verdict.

Bill shuddered. The very name of work was objectionable.

When Sarah entered she exclaimed: "Oh Bill! isn't it lovely to think you haven't heart disease, and you can go to work tomorrow if you like?"

"Nothing of the sort. The doctor's a fool an' doesn't know what he's talking about. Just you feel my heart." Sarah laid her hand over his heart. It certainly was beating a good deal faster than she considered normal. Perhaps the doctor had made a mistake. Sarah's spirits fell to zero.

"I was hoping you would soon be strong enough to earn a bit so that we can go somewhere for a nice holiday. All I have managed is to have paid up the furniture, the doctor's bills and the rent. I don't seem able to save anything.

Bill replied: "Don't worry over that, my girl. You've done very well."

"But supposing I should be taken ill! What would we do then?"

Bill looked scared. "No good lookin' for trouble, we've had enough, at least I have. That influenza took it out of me alright. I've not been the same since, an' it strikes me it'll take a long time before I'm fit to go to work."

On her next visit to the corner house, Mrs. Ellis said: "I thought I was right. There is nothing the matter with your husband. The doctor says he is fit to return to his work to-morrow."

Sarah hesitated before replying, then: "Don't you think he may have made a mistake?" she said. "Bill feels sure he has."

Mrs. Ellis smiled grimly as she replied: "No doubt he does. It maybe suits him to think so. My opinion of that gentleman is that he is a schemer and doesn't want to work."

Sarah looked indignant, and replied hotly: "You are quite mistaken, Mrs. Ellis; my husband has been very ill and really is not fit to work."

"He may not be fit to take up his old occupation as boiler maker," said Mrs. Ellis, "but he could do odd jobs now and then, or at least make a start to do something."

Sarah did not reply. She was thinking.

That afternoon Sarah called: "Bill." "Hullo," came the lazy answer.

"I want you."

"What for?"

"To chop me some wood for the copper."

No answer was forthcoming. Bill did not appear, and Sarah went in search of him. He was seated in one chair, his feet on another. He was smoking placidly.

Sarah frowned: "Come on Bill, I want some wood chopped. I've got such a lot of work to get through."

Bill went on smoking.

“Oh come on Bill, hurry up. I’ve got no time to waste.

Bill did not move.

Sarah went white with temper as she grasped him by the shoulder and slightly shook him.

“It’s time you made a move. I’m about sick of doing everything.”

Bill rose to his feet, his face red with anger. there, I’ve had enough of this. Ever since that bloomin’ doctor’s bin to the house there’s bin nothing but, ‘Bill I want this,’ an’ ‘Bill I want that,’ till I’m dead sick of it. I tell you since you’ve been going to the corner house you do nothing but nag, nag, all day. I tell you straight I’ll do just as I like, and when I want to go to work, I’ll go, an’ not before.”

Bill resumed his seat, filled his pipe and settled down to smoke and read. Sarah returned to her work.

### Chapter III.

A day or two later, Sarah asked Bill to go round to the wood yard to order some wood, and bring a few pieces with him, as the carter was sometimes slow in delivering it. Bill refused. Sarah grew indignant.

"Surely you'll do that for me? I have no wood to cook the dinner with."

Bill shrugged his shoulders as he replied: "You should have thought of that yesterday. The heat's fair knocked me up."

What about me working all day? Don't you think I feel it?"

Bill smiled in an irritating manner as he replied: "Women are different to men. They don't feel the heat like we do."

Sarah was about to reply, when she paused, then turned away.

As Bill sat down to lunch, he noticed there was only a small plate and knife in front of him. Then he looked at the table. He frowned as he saw before him only bread and butter. Never in all their married life had he sat down to such scanty fare. He waited. Sarah cut a slice of bread and proceeded to butter it, then she calmly began to eat.

"Is this all we are going to have to eat?" Bill demanded.

Sarah nodded and smiled.

Bill grew red in the face. "That's no good to get me strength up."

Sarah did not reply.

"I want something to eat. Do you hear me?"

Sarah looked as though she was deaf and continued to eat in silence.

Bill hammered on the table with the end of his knife.



As Sarah did not take any notice, he thrust his angry face near hers. "I want something decent to eat, not a bit of stale bread and butter."

Sarah calmly finished eating the piece she had bitten off, then said: "So do I, but as there was no wood to cook anything by, well, we had to have what we could get."

"But you could have gone round to the ham and beef shop and bought something tasty, not sit a feller down to this dry tack."

"I could have gone, but I did not want to," she replied.

Bill looked as though he could not believe his ears. He rose from the table with a disgusted "Bah!" then went out of the room.

Sarah heard him fling himself down in the easy chair. For a moment she felt sorry, then her face hardened. Ever since the doctor's visit she had quietly watched him, and felt sure there was now nothing wrong with Bill, but laziness. The habit had steadily grown. First from natural inclination, then from habitual lying about since his illness, until it had grown to be second nature. He needed rousing. Once Sarah was determined to do anything, she usually succeeded. Now she would make Bill work.

During the next few days Bill's meals were neglected. Requests were continually made for him to help turn the mangle, bring in wood, light the copper fire, until Bill grew tired of hearing his own name. Steadily he refused all Sarah's demands, determined to show her that he was master and would do as he wished.

Sarah, like the wise little woman she was, soon realised that Bill would not be driven. She altered her tactics. Ceasing all demands, she waited for a few days before venturing the new attack. Bill thought he had tired her out, es-

pecially as the meals were again plentiful and cooked in the usual fashion.

One day Sarah came home looking white and ill. Bill felt alarmed as she sank down in a chair and commenced to cry.

"Here old girl, what's up?"

Sarah did not reply, she really felt too tired to answer. The continuous work, the strain of meeting all the bills, was now telling on her. She felt utterly weary.

Bill bent over her.

"Buck up, Sally, there's a good girl. Don't cry any more."

At the old, endearing name of Sally, Sarah's tears began to fall faster than ever. She felt hysterical.

"Here come on. What's the matter. What can I do?"

Sarah dried her tears and sat up. As soon as she could speak, she said: "Bill, I'm tired of the everlasting work, day after day. I think you ought to try and look for something, and not leave me to do everything. I can't last any longer at this rate. I'm sure to have a breakdown."

Bill looked miserable as he said: "It's no good for me to try me old job, but if you tell me what I can do to earn a bit, I'll do it."

"Bill," said Sarah, looking earnestly into her husband's face, "if you'd only try, I'll help all I can."

Bill looking somewhat shamefaced, said: "You find me something to do and I'll do it."

Sarah rose and softly kissed her husband. She had sufficient sense not to refer to the subject again that evening.

Two days later, Sarah told Mrs. Ellis of Bill's promise, but that lady was distinctly sceptical."

"Hm," she murmured, "we will see. I doubt if he will keep his promise."

Sarah, who knew her husband as he really was, with all his faults, said: "Yes, Mrs. Ellis, he will once he has given a promise. The trouble is that you can't get Bill to promise that he will do a thing. Now I feel happy, because I know he will keep his word. My only trouble is to find him something that he can do."

"Is that all," remarked Mrs. Ellis. "Don't let that trouble you. I'll set him to cut the grass in the front of the house."

"I wonder if he will know how to do it?" inquired Sarah.

"Well, he will soon learn. Pushing a lawn mower doesn't require special intelligence, only strength and perseverance. If I were you, Sarah I wouldn't tell him what work I intend to set him, only say that I have a couple of hours' light work for him to do."

After Sarah had been home some time and had finished most of her duties, she joined Bill on the verandah.

"Bill," she said softly, "Mrs. Ellis wants you to call on her tomorrow about ten o'clock. She has a little job she wants done. It won't take you long to do."

Bill looked up from reading his paper. "Who said I wanted to do a job?"

Sarah gave a little cry of dismay. "Oh Bill! she cried, "you promised that if I got you something to do, you would do it, and you never break your promises to me."

Bill scowled as he said: "I thought you had forgotten all about that."

"I never forget what you promise me, Bill," answered Sarah, smiling sweetly.

It was nearer to eleven than ten, when Bill arrived at the corner house. Mrs. Ellis opened the door and looked keenly at him. Then she said: "I want you to cut the grass in the front of the house. You will find the mower in the

tool house," pointing to a shed at the rear.

Bill grunted: "Is that what you wanted me to do?" "Strikes me it's a bit 'ard."

Mrs. Ellis made no reply. Bill sauntered away, returning in a leisurely fashion trailing the mower behind.

Mrs. Ellis followed him to the front of the house. "You start here," she said, "and then work to the gate. The edges you cut with the hand cutter. You will find it hanging on a nail in the tool house."

Bill looked at the grass, then at Mrs. Ellis. "Seems ter me this'll take a bit o' doing," he said. "It don't look to me like an easy job."

Mrs. Ellis smiled as she said: "It's not nearly so hard as it looks. Now get busy, and as soon as you are finished you may go home."

Bill sighed at the thought of home and his easy chair.

Mrs. Ellis walked away and hurried into her bedroom, where from behind the curtains of the open window, she watched him. She saw him give a big sigh, then lift the handle of the mower and begin to push it. When he had cut a few yards, he stopped and looked back.

"Well, I'm blowed," she heard him say. "I'm blessed if the blooming thing'll cut straight. I can see I'll 'ave to go all over that again."

Bill retreated with the mower and began afresh. As he moved along he found that often he would be obliged to pass the mower two or three times over one place, particularly where the grass was thick. His progress was slow.

Mrs. Ellis smiled as she saw Bill stop and remove his hat, and wipe away the perspiration which dripped down his face.

After contemplating his work for some time, Bill began again. He had evidently made up his mind not to linger over it, for he pushed the machine with strength and vigor.



Suddenly the mower stopped and the handle caught Bill right in the pit of the stomach. He gave a fearful grunt and collapsed on the grass, doubled himself up and with his arms crossed rocked himself to and fro. Mrs. Ellis stuffed the curtain in her mouth, so that Bill should not hear her chuckling. It was a long time since she had enjoyed anything so thoroughly.

After Bill had rested for some time, he rose and lifted the handle, looked at it, and then with outstretched arms proceeded to push it well away from him. Seeing he had no power over the machine, he was obliged to grasp it with his two hands, and hold it nearer.

His anxiety not to get hurt was most amusing to the onlooker, especially when the mower would slightly hesitate; then Bill would skip on one side of the handle with quite agile movements, and with a most comical look on his face.

After watching for some time, Mrs. Ellis told Violet May to call Bill in the kitchen for some tea. When the tea was made, Violet May went to the front of the house and called: "Mr. 'Aris, the missus ses as 'ow yer ter 'ave a cup o' tea. It's awaitin' fer yer in the kitchen."

Bill looked up, glad of the interruption. Quickly he threw down the handle and gave a big sigh as he murmured: "Thank Gawd for that," and followed the girl into the kitchen.

The tea was on the table, but no chair placed for him to sit on. He stood a moment leaning on the table, then looked round.

"If yer awitin' fer me yer git yer a chair, yer'll 'ave ter wite a long time," said Violet May with a sniff. "I don't believe on witin' on people as can wite on theirselves."

Bill grunted in reply, then drew forward a chair and sank down with a groan: "Ah-h, this is something like."

"Yer don't tell me yer tired a'ready? There's

lots more ter do yit. Wite till yer dun all that there grass, then yer'll 'ave somethin' ter groan about."

Bill scowled at her. "Here," he said, I don't want a lot o' your talk. Gimme me tea."

Violet May tossed her head as she replied in a very tart voice: "'Ere it is, an' if I 'ad my wiy, I'd give yer somethin' with it. Somethin' ye'd remember too fer many a long diy. Torkin' to a lidy like that."

Bill put down his cup as he said: "Talking to a what? I don't see any lady about."

Violet May's face grew crimson as she replied hotly: "Allow me ter tell yer I'm a lidy, an' I'll 'ave yer ter know it, too; torkin' ter me like that."

"Like what?" retorted Bill. Have a bit o' sense, do. All I says was, 'I don't want a lot o' your talk,' an' neither I do," and Bill proceeded to finish his tea.

When the cup was empty, Violet May picked it up and refilled it and placed it in front of him, saying: "There, I don't wish yer any 'arm, but I 'opes it'll choke yer."

Bill replied: "No fear o' that, but I know someone that ought to have had that done, when they was born."

Violet May placed her two hands on the table and bent her face close to Bill's.

"Oh, do yer? Well then it's a pity some people are born at all fer all the good they are in this world. No good ter flesh or fowl."

Bill rose from his chair and kicked it out of his way as he strode to the door, then he turned, and looking at Violet May said: "You can thank your lucky stars you don't belong ter me, for if you did, I'd make you civil."

"Would yer!" retorted Violet May, her face white with temper. "I can thank me lucky

stars I don't belong ter yer, fer if I did, I'd drown meself.'

"An' a good thing if yer did," came Bill's voice as he closed the door and returned to his work.

Mrs. Ellis entered the kitchen. "Did I hear angry voices, Jones?" she asked.

"Yus, yer did, ma'am," replied Violet May in heated tones. "I can't abear that there feller with 'is sighin' an' moanin'. 'E mikes me 'ot all over. But 'e got no change outer me," she finished triumphantly.

Mrs. Ellis smiled as she listened to a garbled account of her maid's victory.

"Jones," she said, "your tongue will get you into serious trouble one of these days. Don't you know the old saying, 'A still tongue makes a wise head.'"

Violet May sniffed as she replied: "There's some 'usbands as needs a lively one about 'em, an' that's one uv 'em. 'E wants rousin', that's what 'e does. 'E's 'ad too much witin' on. An' 'e'll git worse, too, you mark my words. Sarah'll git no good out uv 'im, if 'e don't soon go ter work. My word, if 'e was mine, I'd shift 'im."

"I think," said Mrs. Ellis, "Sarah is becoming very tired of her husband's laziness. Take my advice Jones and say nothing whatever to Sarah about her husband. No one can give advice on the subject. It rests entirely between themselves."

Mrs. Ellis then went out to inspect the grass. She found that Bill had cut as much as possible with the mower.

As she approached, he said: "I think you told me as how this job wasn't hard. I tell you that it's crool. Its taken a lot out of me. I feel real bad, I do."

"Nonsense, Harris, you only imagine it. Why,

to-morrow you will feel the benefit of the exercise, and it will do you the world of good."

"Exercise. I got another word for that," pointing to the lawn mower. "I calls it real hard work, an' no mistake about it."

"You have cut it very well," continued Mrs. Ellis, pretending not to notice the injured expression on Bill's face. "All you want to do is to persevere with anything, and you will grow to like it."

"Like it!" again pointing to the mower. "I could persevere till I was black in the face an' I'd take me oath I'd never get to like that."

Mrs. Ellis smiled as she remarked: "Well, the cutting of the edges is simpler. You can sit down to that."

"Ah!" breathed Bill. "That's the job I like. I'll get the cutter; I want to get done."

Mrs. Ellis watched with amusement Bill's brisk walk. "Yes," she murmured, "Jones is right. All he needs is to be made to work until the habit has grown again, then he will take an interest in whatever he is doing and persevere and make something of himself. The grass is well cut better than I have had it done for some time."

Bill reappeared with the shears clicking in his hand. He smiled and nodded as he said: "This won't take me long now."

Mrs. Ellis did not reply; she waited to see the result of his first attempt. Bill laid down at full length, then inserted the shearers and gave them a strong pinch.

"E-h-h," he yelled, throwing them down. "The blinded things nearly nipped the hand off me."

With an effort Mrs. Ellis straightened her face "You don't want to rush things," she said. "You want to take it easy."

'Easy! Well, I like that. When I takes it



easy I 'ear 'hurry Bill,' an' when I wants ter hurry I 'ears 'take it easy.' I'm blowed if a feller knows what ter do. An' it's no good trying to please a woman. I think," making as though to rise, "the best thing I can do is to chuck it up altogether."

"No! No! Harris, continue. Look," she said as she knelt down beside him, "this is the way to use the cutter." Taking it in her hand she proceeded to show Bill the proper way to cut the edges.

It looked so simple. Bill said: "Well, that looks easy enough. Here give 'em to me an' I'll have another go at it."

Mrs. Ellis rose. Bill took the shears, then proceeded to clip along the edge. Soon he stopped to look at his work. It was crooked. "Well, don't that beat the band? It looks that dead easy I thought I'd have it done long before this." Rising to his feet he said: "It's no good, missus, I'll 'ave to give it up."

"Don't say that, Harris. I will go and get a line and show you the correct way. I hardly thought it was necessary, the edges were so straight."

She hurried away, returning shortly with a line having a peg attached to each end. Fixing it along the edges, she showed Bill the benefit of the guiding line.

"Now," she said as she rose, "that is simple enough."

"It looks it," replied Bill in a cautious voice. "But you never knows till you try."

Bill knelt down and commenced cutting. Soon he stopped. "Ah! that's better." He worked along the line until he came to the end peg.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "It may be simple, but it's darned 'ard work."

Mrs. Ellis did not answer, but removed the line and readjusted it. Bill began again, but

soon he came to an extra thick tuft. After sawing at it once or twice, he looked at the shears and muttered: "By jove! they're blunt."

Mrs. Ellis said: "You want to take it gradually, Harris."

"Gradually! You want to leave the whole darn thing alone. It's a rotten job, that's what I call it." Bill's face was most expressive.

Mrs. Ellis with difficulty concealed a smile, saying: "Come along, it will soon be finished now."

Bill, with a grunt, resumed the cutting. After trimming along the straight line, he soon came to a corner. As he was nicely rounding the edges, the shears slipped and gave his hand a nasty nip.

"Eh-h-h," he yelled as he rose to his feet and flung the shears down. "The damn thing's gone and taken a bit outer me hand."

Mrs. Ellis turned away and doubled up with laughter. Bill nursed his hand, sucking the spot to ease the pain.

Mrs. Ellis said: "Let me see it, Harris." Bill held out his hand. There was a red spot showing through the dirt.

"Never mind, Harris," said Mrs. Ellis briskly, "it won't kill you."

Bill scowled. "It won't kill me. No, I know that, but I'm done with that blamed thing."

"You don't mean to say you are finished? Surely you won't give up now. It won't take you more than half an hour to complete the whole thing, and then think how nice it will look."

"Harf an hour?" said Bill disgustedly. "Why, I wouldn't work another blooming minit, let alone another harf hour. And as for that thing," kicking the shears viciously with his foot, "the man who invented that, ought ter be hung."

Bill moved away to where his coat lay and picked it up.

“You are surely not going, Harris?”

Bill looked up. “Yes, I am. That,” waving his hand in the direction of the grass, “is no good to me. The work’s only fit for blacks, an’ I wouldn’t tackle it again for anybody. Good day, missus, an’ thank yer for your job, but it’s not in my line,” and Bill strolled to the gate.

Mrs. Ellis heard him give a big sigh of relief as he shut the gate behind him. When he was out of sight and hearing, Mrs. Ellis sank down, and laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks.

“Oh dear,” she sighed. “I haven’t laughed like that for a long time. It was better than a play. I thought he wouldn’t last. It was too good to be true.” Then her face sobered. “Poor Sarah, I can see she will have to keep him all her life.”

### Chapter IV.

As Bill entered his home, he called: "Sally!" Sarah flew to meet him with beaming face.

"How did you get on, dear?" she asked.

"Get on! Get off, you mean," growled Bill. She gave me some grass to cut. That was bad enough. The mower got up and hit me in the stomach which nearly knocked me out, an' then I'm blowed if the shears 'didn't nearly nip the hand orf me," and Bill held out his hand.

Sarah bent over and examined it, then she felt the red spot.

"Oh! that's nothing to make a fuss about. Here, look at that," turning up her sleeve and showing a partly healed wound. "I did that at the edge of the copper, but I didn't make a fuss. Why, you didn't even know of it."

Bill did not reply, but turned away and sank down in his favorite chair.

"Ah!" he breathed. "This is something like. He closed his eyes, and fell fast asleep. Sarah came and looked thoughtfully at him.

While Bill was eating a delicious tea, Sarah asked:

"Did you finish cutting the grass, Bill?"

"No, I didn't."

"Are you going to finish it to-morrow?"

"Not on your life. I wouldn't pick up one o' them blamed mowers, let alone a cutter, for a fortune. That work's no good to me."

Sarah did not reply for some time. Then she said: "Well then, I'll look for something else for you to do."

"Don't bother," put in Bill hastily. "When I wants work I'll find it myself, but I'm not going to be in any hurry. It'll take me some time ter get over this. I feel as stiff as a bus horse."

Sarah did not reply, but her face hardened.

The days that followed were full of work for Sarah. Bill rested.

Mrs. Ellis made inquiries as to Bill's health, as she gave Sarah the full amount for his work.

Sarah grimly replied: "He is getting lazier every day."

Mrs. Ellis made no comment.

As the days went by, Sarah suggested all sorts of jobs for Bill to do to bring in extra money. But Bill refused to entertain one of them. He would not work. Sarah cudgelled her brains and devised all sorts of schemes to induce him to make a start. She found that starving was of little use; she only suffered herself, as it was impossible to bring food to the table and not share it.

Sarah grew desperate. She felt she could not go on much longer without a holiday, and that meant the rent and other bills would accumulate and she felt she could not face the strain again.

One day she told all her troubles to Mrs. Ellis, who listened in silence until the tale was told. Then she put an arm around Sarah's shoulders and kissed her.

"Sarah," she said, "you have been remarkably patient with your husband; much more so than I could be, and I really do not know how you have endured it so long. Your husband is a strong, healthy man, able to work, whilst after all you are only a frail little woman with a big spirit. It is a difficult thing to give advice. What you really need is rest of body, but more of mind. Have you thought out a plan of any sort?"

"Yes," replied Sarah. "I thought of selling the furniture unbeknown to Bill—leaving half the money for him, and then taking a situation in the country where he can't find me. As



soon as his money is gone, he will be obliged to earn his living, or else starve, and I know Bill won't do that. He is too fond of his food for that."

"Um," murmured Mrs. Ellis. "Not a bad idea. It would teach him a lesson and would do him the world of good. But can you go through with it? So many wives take strong action with their husbands and then fail at the critical moment through love of the man, or weakness of character."

"I'll go through with anything I begin, for I can see nothing that I can say or do makes any difference to Bill. He won't get out of bed, now, before twelve o'clock, and I am tired of it all."

"What about storing your furniture? It seems a pity to sell it after you have had such a struggle to pay for it."

"I have thought of that, but Bill won't have anything to start on, and I couldn't leave him without any money. Besides, furniture doesn't make you happy when it needs cleaning and you haven't the strength to do it."

"Quite right," replied Mrs. Ellis. "If you do break up your home and wish to save a few things, I will keep them for you, until you need them again."

"Thank you ever so much, Mrs. Ellis. You have been a good friend to me. You gave me my first helping hand."

"My dear girl, you worked for every penny you earned, and you have always proved most reliable. You deserve better treatment from your husband. Do nothing until I see you again, and if you are of the same mind, I will help you if possible."

"Thank you," replied Sarah. "I only hope I won't be a nuisance to you."

Sarah was very thoughtful during the next

few days. Then she said: "Bill, I wonder what you would do if anything happened to me?"

As Bill did not reply, she continued: "Say I was to run away from you? What would you do then?"

Bill laughed as he replied: "You wouldn't run far. You'd be back before you knew where you were."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, you couldn't do without me, old girl. You're too fond of me to stay away long."

"Don't make that mistake, Bill. If I went away from you now, I wouldn't come back unless you could keep me. I'm tired of doing all the work."

"Oh orlight! orlight! I do nothing but hear of work, work till I'm sick of the very name of it. I tell you that if anything happened to you I'd git on orlight."

Sarah turned away without another word.

The next day she called on Mrs. Ellis. Together they went to a firm and made arrangements for the sale of the furniture.

Daily, Bill was accustomed to go for a gentle stroll, buy the afternoon paper and sit in the park and read it, then talk to a few cronies, as idle as himself.

A few days later he entered the gate; the front door stood open. He noticed the windows were bare of curtains, but it did not startle him. Sarah was always washing them. As he walked on to the verandah, he missed his favorite chair. He frowned. He hated to search for anything he needed. He stopped suddenly at the open door. The little hall was empty. Then he entered the bedroom. There was nothing in it. All the furniture had been removed.

He strode into the dining room; not a thing remained. It was empty. Pale and dazed he entered the kitchen.

Sarah, concealed in the old fashioned cupboard, peeped through the little piece of perforated gauze which a former tenant had evidently put in to give air. Her heart was beating fast. It was a long time since she had seen Bill so stirred. She saw him go towards the fireplace, then heard him take down her letter and a small parcel and walk towards the window. She was glad, as she wanted to see the manner in which he would receive the news. He opened her letter and read it.

As Bill finished reading, he cleared his throat two or three times.

Sarah watched with tender eyes. She saw him open the little parcel of money and count it.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "This will save me from looking round fer a bit. Now I can back a few gee-gees with this, an' then I won't have to bustle."

Sarah's face hardened; he had not a thought for her. She saw him look round the empty kitchen as though he did not realise that it was no longer his home. Then he entered the wash-house. In a corner he saw his clothes all neatly packed, ready to be taken away. He picked up a suit case and carried it to the kitchen; then he put it down.

Sarah saw him take out her letter and again read it through.

"I'm damned if I will make another home in twelve months," he muttered in angry tones. If she likes to chuck up everything, well let her. She can do what she likes. I know this, I'm goin' to have a good time," and he put his hand in his pocket and half drew out the money. He stood gazing out of the window at the neighbor's fence.

Sarah then heard: "I wonder where the hell she's gone to." Then she saw him shrug his



shoulders, and heard: "I daresay she'll be back in a day or two. She won't stay away twelve months."

He went into the washhouse and returned with another bundle, laid it next the suit case in the kitchen. He paused again at the window, and Sarah heard: "I wonder where's she got to?" Then, in louder tones: "It's all that damned old woman at the corner. She's done it all."

Sarah felt inclined to say: "No, not she, but you with your lazy ways," but she kept silent. Then she saw Bill open the kitchen door and heard him knock at the fence

"Waal, what ast?" boomed a deep voice almost like a man's. It was her neighbor, an elderly Dutch woman.

"My wife's sold up everything an' gone away. Can you tell me where she 'as gone to?"

"Nay, an' eef a couldt ai would nay. Ye are noddinks boot a lazy tink dat does nodinks all day but readt te paper an' smoke te pipe. Yaah!" The voice rose in angry excitement. "Eef you vast mine, ai wouldt preak effery pone ind te pody. Yaah!"

Bill was not in the humor to hear reproaches. He was looking for sympathy.

"Shut up," he growled. "I don't want to hear you jaw."

"Shoot oop, didt you say? I vill makes you shoot oop qvick an' lively yoursalvs."

Sarah heard a movement as though her neighbor was climbing the fence; then she heard Bill hurriedly enter and lock the door.

The movements outside ceased.

Bill was in a rage. Sarah saw him shake his fist in the direction of her neighbor and heard him say: "I'd like to give her a damn good hiding." She saw him stoop to pick up his luggage, then straighten himself as he looked towards the

cupboard. Her heart missed a beat. Then she heard: "I wonder is she's left me something to eat?"

He approached the cupboard and tried to open the door. Sarah held her breath. She had taken precautions to secure it on the inside, but would he force it? Bill pulled the handle, but as it did not open he turned away.

"No good bothering she's taken everything with her. I'm oc ter get lodgings an' stay there for a bit any way."

She heard the front door close with a bang, and then the sound of his retreating footsteps.

Sarah breathed with relief. He had gone. Quickly she opened the back door, went out and locked it behind her, and then entered her neighbor's house.

The Dutch woman's broad face beamed with kindly feeling.

"Didt you hear vadt I toldt your hoosbandt?" she inquired, laughing at the recollection. "I tink he vas afraidt off me."

Sarah smiled as she thought of Bill's hurried retreat and the rapid closing and locking of the door. Then she sighed. She had gone through much planning and excitement lately.

"Now, my tear," continued Mrs. Straat. "You are no more off to vorry. Haffe a goodt tea an' den you go to your bedt an' you sleeps ass lonk ass you can mit each your eyes closse taight, so ass no to tink off your hoosbandt. Ach! he no vort a tort."

Sarah nodded: "I will be very glad of my bed to-night, and it is extremely—"

Mrs. Straat interrupted her with "Shoo! It gips me mooch pleasure to haffe you mit me ven you are in sooch trouble. Eet iss so sorry I am dat you no stay loonger dan too days. Nefer mindt, dat too days vill giff you mooch rest, an'

den any time you wants a goodt rest, you must coom mit me."

How grateful Sarah felt as he laid her head on the snowy pillow. Soon she fell asleep.

It was late when she awakened to find Mrs. Straat standing by her bedside with a dainty breakfast on a tray. She sat up with a start, then sank back again at the lovely thought that there was no necessity to get up and have so much work done at a certain time. Oh the relief!

She began to apologise for oversleeping. Mrs. Straat laughed as she interrupted, "Waal, you vas tired mit yourselves an' you sleeps zoost as iff you vas nefer your eyes to open. I say is in sleeps mit herselves she does not tink off dat pootiful hoosbandt dat vill not work, Jah!"

Sarah laughed at the expressive face. To such an industrious race as the Dutch, laziness was a crime.

Mrs. Straat watched with delight Sarah eat a good meal, then she lifted the tray, and prepared to depart.

"Eef my advice you wouldt take, in your bedt you vill stay. I vill pring you one pretty book an' then you vill readt an' I tink to sleeps your eyes vill coom. Eas dat not so?"

Sarah smiled. "Yes," she answered, "I feel as if I could still sleep for hours."

Mrs. Straat went from the room nodding her head and saying: "Jah! jah! dat ees so."

She returned with a book—Sarah took it and looked at the title, "TWO LOVES,"—then shook her head and said: "I don't believe that a woman could love two men, at least I couldn't." Then the tears came to her eyes at the thought of Bill, and she sank sobbing on the pillow.

Mrs. Straat bent over her and patted her on the shoulder. "Nay, nay," she crooned. "Do not weep so. Your hoosbandt ees not ill ,an' he

vill now enzoy himsalfe an' do nodinkt ontill he not hafe one pfenning to spendt, den ee coom to you an' you giff him more, dat you so hardt vork for."

Sarah sat up and dried her eyes. "You are quite right," she said. "I am very silly to cry," but her voice hardening and the tears all gone. "I am determined I will not give him another penny—I have worked very hard to keep things going, thinking he would make a move to earn money when he grew strong enough, but he grew lazier and lazier. No!" she finished, "I have had enough."

"Jah! jah!" returned Mrs. Straat, "You haffe don your bestt, an' I tink it vill be a beeg lesson to eem an' vil do eem de vorldt off goodt. Now you readt te leetle book an' see vhat happens to zat poore leetle Nancy all trou to lofe von beeg scooundrel." After shaking up the pillows and smoothing the bedclothes, she went from the room, nodding her head.

### Chapter V.

When he left his home Bill walked, carrying his suitcase and bundle to a tram. As the tram sped swiftly towards the city his thoughts were filled with the idea of being free to do as he wished—to get up when he liked, with no one to remind him of work or time, was most alluring. Then he had always wanted to try his luck at horse racing and in the past had not had the money to spend. Many times when sweetly resting on the grass in one of the parks, he and a cronie had “picked a winner.” It seemed such an easy way of earning money—much more inviting than hard work. Visions of a large fortune floated before Bill’s eyes. With a start he found he had passed his street. Sighing, he noticed the length between the two stoppings.

“When I’m rich,” he muttered, “I’ll make ’em alter this street. It’s far too long. The whole damn country wants altering, that’s my opinion.”

Entering a cheap residential he engaged and paid a week in advance for a bedroom. After walking up two flights of stairs, a dirty looking boy opened a door. Bill entered and flung down his luggage. The boy lingered. Bill turned on him, “What the hell do you want? Get! Do you hear!” The boy disappeared in a hurry.

Bill looked round the tiny room. It was clean, but uninviting. Remembrance flashed through his mind of his former bedroom with its snowy bed and neat appearance; then of Sally. He scowled as he thought of her. How dared she upset him and disturb the peaceful routine of his life?



Thrusting his hand in his pocket he felt the notes. His face cleared. "Ah!" he thought. "He would show her who could earn money, and plenty of it, too. Not a measly little bit, just enough to barely live on, but lots."

A pang of hunger aroused him. He was hungry. He went down stairs and entered a nearby eating house. The air was hot and full of varied smells, not at all pleasant. Seating himself at a table that had evidently been used by a careless eater he waited. No one came.

Rapping on the table with the back of a knife, he called: "'Ere," to a tired, pasty-faced girl who was leaning against a table talking to a pimply looking youth.

She looked round and sauntered towards Bill. "Yes," she said, "What's cher order?"

Bill scowled: "What have you got?"

"Rum' stike, curried sorsages, tripe an' on-yens and stoo." She ran on not pausing to remove the piece of chewing gum from her mouth.

Bill said: "Say it again, Miss, an' this time not so quickly."

"What's the matter with yer ears, 'ave yer got wool in 'em?" Quickly she repeated her former list.

Bill paused. All those dishes were tempting. He ordered rump steak. After waiting until his patience was nearly exhausted, the waitress appeared carrying a plate. She placed it in front of him, then sauntered away.

Bill eyed the dried up looking meat on his plate, and then attacked it with knife and fork. After sawing at it and making little impression, he dug his fork in it and with his fingers tore off a piece and placed it in his mouth.

"Sp-s-s," he spat the piece on to his plate—it was bad. He again knocked loudly on the table. The girl sauntered up and rested against it, one hand on her hip and still chewing.



"Yes," she drawled, "what's the matter now, that cher makin' all that there row abart?"

Bill picked up his plate and shoved it under her nose. "Matter! Why, the blooming meat's stinkin', that's what's the matter."

The girl took the plate in her hand, bent her face and gave a loud sniff. "Stinkin'! I don't calls that stinkin'. It's a bit 'igh certainly, but cher couldn't call it stinkin'.

"It's rotten, fair rotten, that's what it is," said Bill, his face red with anger.

"Oh, well, don't make a song abart it, ye'll 'ave worse'n that before yer die. I'll chinge it for somethin' else. Give us the word."

Bill said: "What have you got?"

The girl gave an unimpatient sniff: "'Ow many more times do yer wants me ter sing out the menoo? 'Ave a 'eart."

Bill returned: "Well, how the hell can I remember all you got to say?"

The girl bent down and thumped a dirty hand on the table in front of Bill. "Well, 'ow the 'ell am I ter know there's a bloomin' dook in the 'ouse an' wants a 'ell of a lot o' witin' on? Come on, give us yer order an' lets git done, me time's near up. Rum' stike, no, that's dead off. Curried sorsages, tripe an' onyens an' stoo."

"I'll have tripe, an' plenty of it, too," replied Bill. He was so accustomed to that speech at home that it came quite naturally.

The girl replied as she turned away: "Ye'll 'ave what cher can git at this time o' night."

Bill scowled. Things were not going too well.

The girl came back. "Tripe's orf."

"Well, then," said Bill, "I'll have stew.

In a short time a plate was placed before him. Bill gazed at it. As the girl turned away, he called: "Here, what do you call this?"

The girl returned. "What's the matter now?" she demanded impatiently.

"This is not stew. It's a lot of bally water and a bit o' meat chucked in."

"Ho!" said the girl, now thoroughly aroused. "I've 'ad about enuf o' you, with yer, 'Bring me this, an' bring me the other.' I tell yer me fine gentleman it'll do yer the world o' good to starve a bit."

Just then the proprietor, a big burly fellow, appeared at the end of the room.

"Come 'ere," she yelled, beckoning to him. He gave a hitch to his trousers, spat on his hands and came hurriedly towards them. The waitress went forward to meet him.

"This feller 'ere 'as done nothin' but order things an' send 'em back," she accused.

A crowd began to gather. Bill rose from his seat. To give him his due, he was no coward; besides, his temper, at the best of times, was not of the sweetest, and it was now thoroughly roused by all he had recently passed through.

The proprietor stood before him. "'Ere, what's this I 'ear? Givin' yer blanky orders an' then sendin' 'em back agin. Oo the 'ell are yer, eh, I'd like to know, an' what's wrong with the tucker?"

"Wrong with it," sneered Bill. "Why, it's not fit fer a blooming dorg to eat, let alone a human being."

"Ho! isn't it. Well all I knows is yer got ter pay fer what cher ordered." Turning to the waitress he demanded: "What did yer bring to 'im?" She told him the items. Glaring at Bill, the proprietor said: "Part up three bob an' look lively too, else it'll be the worst for you."

Bill laughed. "Me part up three bob fer that" pointing to the watery looking mess on his plate. "Not much."

The proprietor then made a movement as if to punch Bill on the nose, when a policeman

entered. "What's all this about?" he asked, coming forward.

Instantly the proprietor put down his hands and faced him: "This 'ere feller," indicating Bill. "as ordered three lots and refuses ter pay for 'em."

The policeman eyed Bill as he asked: 'Is that right?'

"Right! Not much. I ordered rump steak and she," pointing to the waitress, who still stood by, "brought me a bit o' stinking meat that wasn't fit to eat—I sent it back and asked for tripe. I was lucky to have missed that. Then she brought this," picking up his plate and shoving it under the policeman's nose, and appealing to him. "Now what do you call this? I asks yer, is it fit for a feller to eat."

"Here," he said, gently pushing the plate away, "take care! I don't want grease all over my coat. I grant you it doesn't look too savoury. If you have eaten any of it you must expect to pay for it."

"Eaten it! Not on your life, and I won't pay for it neither."

The bobbie turned to Bill. "We don't want any of that talk. If I hadn't turned up, the boss would have made you pay."

"He'd have a try, but it would have been his last on this earth, let me tell yer that." Bill's face looked dangerous.

"Come on," said the policeman with a jerk of his head. "Get out." Then turning to the proprietor, he finished with: "It's not the first complaint 've had of this lately," nodding at the room. "The best thing you can do is to sell out to someone that can run the thing decently, else we'll make it hot for you. Food like that," pointing at the stew, which had now a thick coat of yellow fat on it, "is not fit for pigs to eat."

The proprietor, glad no doubt, that the policeman had not entered the complaint in his book and therefore had saved a visit from the food inspector, said: "The wife's chucked it an' left me to run the bloomin' show by meself.

Bill paused half way to the door, then returned. "I'm sorry, old man. I'm just in the same boat meself. Shake! he said, putting out his hand. The other grasped it. The policeman smiled as he moved away, saying: "Well, I'm blowed!"

The proprietor waved his hand to a chair. "Sit down," he said, "an' 'ave a bit o' grub with me, not that tack," pointing to the plate, "but a bit o' prime roast beef." (Bill's mouth watered at the thought of delicious roast beef.) "'Ere," he yelled to another girl, "quick an' lively." Turning to Bill, he said: "These bloomin' girls fair give me the 'ump. It takes me to liven 'em up. I'll be damn glad to be outer this place an' 'ave a spell." The girl stood waiting for his order. "Tell chinkie ter give yer two 'elpins of roast beef, cut from the middle, an' see that e' puts plenty on the plates, an' step it out quick and lively an' don't keep us witin' all night." The girl gave her head a toss and moved briskly away.

"That's the way to liven 'em up," said Tom. "A woman needs a firm 'and over 'er, else she'll play merry 'ell."

The girl returned with two plates of beef. The meat looked nice and Bill attacked it vigorously, and had almost finished it when some vegetables were placed in front of him. He scooped them on to his plate and began to eat them. Even though he was hungry, he could not help noticing the difference in those that were cooked at home, and the ones that he was eating. His companion had already finished eating his meat.



“’Ow about another ’elpin. I could do with a bit more, an’ so could you.” Not waiting for Bill’s consent, he yelled: “Mag!” The girl who had waited on them hurried forward. ‘Bring another lot for both of us, an’ be quick about it.’

As the girl moved away, Tom, the proprietor, said: “The wife’s left me ’cause of ’er. I was just ’avin’ a bit of a chip, when the wife catches me, an’ she went off pop. Just for all the world like a bundle of crackers. There was no ’arm in it. The poor girl was tellin’ me ’er troubles, an’ I ’ad me ’and round ’er waist to comfort ’er a bit, when o’ course she must come in. That finished ’er. She wouldn’t listen to anythin’ I ’ad ter say. I lost me temper an’ told ’er to go ter ’ell. I left the two of ’em chippin’ for all they was worth. The next thing I sees is she with ’er ’at on, with a face as white as a sheet. ‘I’m off, Tom,’ she ses. I ses: ‘Oh, alright. Go if yer want ter,’ not thinkin’ fer a minit that she meant it, an’ blest if she didn’t take me at me word an’ I ’aven’t seen a sight of ’er since.” As he finished, Mag placed the plates in front of the two men. Tom and Bill ate in silence. As soon as all the food had disappeared, Tom leaned back. “Ah!” he breathed, “That was a bit o’ all right. ’Ow about you?” he asked. Bill replied “Not too bad.” He leaned back and followed his hosts example and lit his pipe.

“I wanted that bad. It’s hours since my lunch.” He puffed in silence.

Tom said: “What ’appened to yer?”

“Me!” inquired Bill, scowling. “I went for me usual walk, an’ when I was out blest me if my wife hadn’t sold up every stick o’ furniture. You could ’ave knocked me down with a blooming feather.”

“Go on!” ejaculated Tom, quite interested in the story. “Yer don’t say so.”



"I got a room down the street," continued Bill, "and I'm goin' to stop there as long as it suits."

"Not a bad idea," said Tom. "In a job?" he inquired.

"Not me," said Bill emphatically. "That's the trouble. All the women wants you to do is to work like a nigger all day, and I can tell you straight that's no good to me, an' I'm not going ter do it fer any bloomin' woman."

"'Ow about the ready?" asked Tom.

"Not too bad. The wife left me harf the money of the furniture, an' I'm off to the races Saturday an' back one o' me fancies."

"Go on! So am I. "Do yer know anythin' good?"

"No," said Bill, "I haven't been on a race course since I left the old country, but I bet you I can pick a winner. Many a time I fancied a horse an' if I'd put anything on I would have made a decent bit, but the wife," here his voice softened as there flashed through his mind some of Sarah's goodness, "was a bit short an' I didn't bother; but now," here his voice brightened as he thought of his future prospects, "I'll have a fortune in no time."

Tom rose saying: "Come on in 'ere," pointing to a back room, "an' we'll 'ave a drink."

"I don't drink," said Bill.

Tom stopped, turned, and looked with something like horror into Bill's face as he said: "What! Yer don't drink?"

"No," returned Bill. "It makes me sick as a dorg. I tried it two or three times and it always served me the same."

Tom sighed with relief as he said: "Whew! I thought yer was a bloomin' T. T."

Bill laughed: "Do I look it,"

They entered a little back room just off the kitchen.

"Sit down," said Tom. Bill shook his head as he backed to the door.

"No, I could no more stand the smell of the cooking than fly in the air. I must get out o' this."

"It's a bit 'eavy," said Tom, 'but yer git used ter it. Ter tell yer the truth I'll be glad to git kit of it meself. I've got two buyers witin' fer me ter come down in me price—then I'll 'ave a good time I can tell you. I'm about fed up with the bloomin' work," finished Tom.

"Same 'ere," agreed Bill. "You can have too much of a good thing."

Tom then went and relieved the girl at the cash desk and sat in her place, pulled out a sporting paper, and together they discussed the different merits of the favorite horses that were to run on Saturday. It was late ere they had finished their friendly argument. Bill promised to drop in on the morrow for meals, then went to his room. The gas was off as it was so late, and after undressing himself by the aid of a few matches, Bill flung himself down, pulled the clothes over him, and tried to go to sleep.

The unusual excitement of the past few hours were now taking their toll. Bill could not sleep. He tossed and turned until the sheet under him crumpled up into knobs, and the top one twisted itself into a rope that threatened to choke him. Towards dawn he dropped off into a heavy sleep.

## Chapter VI.

A loud hammering on the door wakened him. Dazed, he sprang out of bed, unlocked, and slightly opened the door. The boy who had escorted him to his room the previous day stood outside. "'Ere," he said in a cheeky voice, "'Ow much longer are yer goin' ter sleep? I've got ter git them rooms done by twelve, an' it's near that now. The missus'll rouse like 'ell if they're not done."

Bill opened the door. "Come on in," he said in a surly voice, and proceeded to dress himself.

In a few minutes he entered the eating house. Tom was talking earnestly to a shrewd looking woman. Bill seated himself at a table. Mag came forward with a smile. "See 'er?" she whispered, "That's the one as wants ter buy the place. She's a shrewdie she is, as 'ard as nails." Then, aloud: "We've got a good bit o' corn beef goin'; better 'ave a bit o' that. It's a bit of orlright. I tasted it meself."

"Orlright," said Bill. "And a big pot o' tea." Mag returned with the food and Bill ate heartily. He saw Tom receive some money and write something on a piece of paper and hand it to his companion, who examined it carefully, and then remarked in a loud voice:

"Now that's settled. I'll be here first thing to-morrow mornin' an' see that everythin's al-right. Pity 'elp you if yer try any monkey tricks with me."

"That's orlright," replied Tom. "Yer needn't be afraid o' that, an' if yer like yer can bring yer 'usband with yer, too."

The woman replied with a sniff: "My husband! A lot o' good 'e is ter me. I can do much better without him."

Tom made no reply until he had said, "Good day" to her, then he joined Bill with a disgusted: "She's another of them beauties that thinks they can do better than their 'usbands. I tell you," he continued, heatedly, "if I 'ad my way I'd put the lot as grumbles at their 'usbands in a bag an' pitch 'em in the sea." Bill did not reply. Then, his grievance fading at the thought of his good fortune, he said: "That tart's just paid a deposit on this," looking round the room, "an' I'm damn glad ter git rid of it, too. Yer can't run a place like this without a wife. The other sort's no good. To-morrow she comes in an' takes it over an' pays the balance, an' I walks out." As the thought that soon he would get rid of his responsibilities, Tom got up and said: "I'm off ter git drunk."

Bill caught him by the arm: "Don't be a damn fool. Wait till yer git kit of it. If anything happens while you're out, that's the end of it. And," continued Bill, "I wouldn't trust that girl," pointing to one with slanting eyes, as far as I could throw her."

Tom paused, then sat down by Bill's side. "You're right," he said. "If there's so much as a fork missin' from the invent'ry, I'll 'ave ter make good. That woman," meaning the one who had just left, "'as got a eye like a heagle. Pity 'er 'usband. On Saturday mornin' I'll call round to yer room, an' we'll go out an' make a bit on the races.'

Bill agreed, glad of Tom's company. The rest of the day he lounged about the park, reading all the sporting papers and making notes in a little book he bought especially for it. He grew so excited at the thought of winning money so easily that he forgot to eat. But, with the growing darkness came the thought of food. He rose and entered a fish shop and asked for boiled schnapper. It tasted good, but there



did not seem sufficient to satisfy him. He ate a second helping.

When he got outside he scratched his head: "Um-," he murmured, "it's cost quite a bit the last two days and some how I haven't had a decent feed."

As he strolled along he thought of Sarah, and, walking down Pitt Street, came to the "Herald" office. Here he paused and read the news pasted outside. Idly he glanced down the advertisements, until he came to the personal column. He read: "Sarah leaving to-day. Good bye Bill." A lump came into his throat, and he swallowed hard to keep the tears from falling. He thought of many things as he retraced his steps. The bright lights of a picture show arrested his thoughts, and he entered and sat down. The first picture shown was that of an unhappy married couple, who, when baby arrived, settled down in love and harmony. Bill felt restless. Then the gazette came on, showing many interesting scenes. As an exciting horse race flashed across the screen Bill sat up, and all troubles faded from his mind. Too soon the picture passed. A man sitting next him turned to Bill.

"That's the worst of these bloomin' pictures. They give you a lot o' women tearing their hair an' making a fuss over nothing at all, an' when you see somethin' really good, it's over an' done with in no time."

Bill cordially agreed. In low tones they discussed horses and their merits, scarcely glancing at the different scenes that flashed before their eyes. The gazette reappeared. As the race began, both men leaned forward, scarcely breathing.

"Ah!" sighed Bill's neighbor, "that's the sport for me. I tell you I can pick a winner any time you like. The thing's quite simple. All



you've got to do is to back your fancy and keep on till it wins. It's bound to win some day, and when it does, then you make your pile. Look here," he continued, pulling a little book from his pocket. "See this here," pointing to a name. "I won on that horse fifty quid only the day before yesterday." Bill's mouth watered. Fifty pounds! What a long time that would take him to earn. He shuddered at the thought. "But," the man leaned forward and nodded his head to Bill to come closer, "I'll tell you what," he whispered. "I'm on to a real good thing for to-morrow. Not a word. This horse," pointing to another name in the book, "is bound to win. I got it straight from the stables. I've got a brother-in-law a trainer, and he gives me the office when there's something good on. If you've got a fiver on you, I can get you a hundred to one on it."

Bill gazed at the other man, fascinated at the thought that to-morrow he would win five hundred pounds. Then he hesitated. Almost unconsciously his eyes travelled down the man's clothes. They looked shabby, even in the half dark. He did not look very prosperous.

"I'll tell you what," continued Bill's companion. "You come with me and I'll take you to a bookie that will lay you the odds, and then you can see if I'm not letting you in on something real good. Come on."

As they walked away, the man talked to Bill. He was quite amusing. Soon they came to a tall building, and entered a lift. As it stopped, Bill hesitated and said: "I don't think I'll bother doing anythin' to-night. If you like, I'll meet you on the course to-morrow."

"It's no good to-morrow. It will be too late. You want to get on to it real early, else you won't get your price. I tell you it's a sure thing—you can't go wrong."

Bill, now quite convinced, followed his companion to a door. After knocking in a peculiar fashion, the door opened and a well dressed man greeted them with smiles: "Come right in, now, and don't hesitate. I'm busy fixing up things for to-morrow and won't keep you waiting long." He then nodded to Bill's companion. Bill heard him say: "I tell you that horse will romp home; nothing to come near him in the race. He can't lose. It's a dead cert." The two men faced Bill, and the bookie patted him on the shoulder. "Let me tell you you're real lucky to be in on this," pointing to the horse's name. "It was only yesterday I got on to it myself, and I stand to win quite a pile. You had better put a decent bit on while you're about it.'

Bill shook his head as he replied: "No! I'll risk a fiver, but no more. I haven't even heard of him. I like this," pointing to a well known name." The men laughed.

"Not a hope. He's favorite; but he's got too much weight to carry. Besides, the distance is too far for him."

Bill nodded. "Yes," he agreed. "There's something in that." He pulled out the roll of notes from his pocket, counted five, and handed them to the bookie, who gave him a card in return. Bill looked carefully at the initials and the figures on it, placed it in an inside pocket, and prepared to go.

The bookie said: "Have you got anything on for this race?" pointing to the first in the book.

Bill nodded and said: "I fancy this," naming the horse.

The bookie replied: "Yes, that's first favorite. That will go out 'odds on,' but I'll give you 'evens.' How will that suit you?"

Bill thought for a moment. "Right," he said. "I'll take it." He handed a pound to the man,

and received another card. Bill examined it carefully, then placed it in his pocket with the other.

"What about meeting you on the course? I'll know something real good to-morrow," asked his first friend.

Bill made an appointment to meet him at a certain time and place.

As Bill closed the door behind him, the two men laughed. "We've got a soft thing on there alright," said one.

"I don't know so much about that," returned the other. "He strikes me he won't stand monkeying about."

Bill called on Tom before he retired for the night, and he found him merry with drink. He wanted to tell him of his betting and the prospects of an early fortune, but Tom was too silly to enter into serious conversation.

Bill sat up late that night, planning the spending of the morrow's winnings. Next morning, after breakfast, he waited for Tom to arrive. When he appeared he was staggering.

"Bill, ol boy, I've got the lot 'ere," pulling out of his pocket a large roll of notes. "Come on, an' we'll blue it. Let's 'ave the time of our lives. Be a sport an' 'ave a drink with me. I tell yer what, come on to the corner pub an' we'll 'ave champagne. 'Ave yer ever tasted it?"

"No," Bill replied. "I never had the chance. What's it like?"

"Like!" sighed Tom. "Like 'eaven. I only tasted it once, an' it was great."

They hurried to the hotel, and entered the private bar. A barman came to take their order.

"What's for you?" he asked roughly of Bill.

Tom rose and said. "My shout, ol' boy. I want the biggest bottle of champagne you've got, an' mind it's the best. 'Ere," handing the barman a five pound note, "take it out o' that."

The man took it and rubbed it between his finger and thumb. "Yes, sir. I'll bring you the best we have."

He soon returned with a bottle and two glasses on a tray. He handed Tom some change and waited with outstretched hand. Tom placed a half note in it saying: "Keep it cockalorum." The man thrust it quickly into his pocket, as he saw Bill about to take it from him.

"I say, mate," said Bill. "It's no good chuckin' your money away like that. It won't last no time."

"What's the odds, as long as ye're 'appy. I can allus earn a bit, as soon as this is gorn. Here y'are, drink up, an' fergit all yer troubles." He suited his words by his action. "Ah!" he sighed. "What do yer know about that?"

Bill smacked his lips as he put down the glass. "Not too bad. It's the best I've tasted."

Tom lifted the bottle and held it to the light. "Plenty more, 'ere, an' we can 'ave lots more," tapping his pocket. "Fill 'em up agen, that's me motter," refilling Bill's glass, and then his own. Both men drank. Tom lifted the bottle, and again began to fill Bill's glass. Bill thrust the bottle aside, saying: "No more fer me, thanks. I've 'ad enough."

Tom laughed drunkenly: "What! 'Ad 'nuff? Not me! I'm 'ere fer the day."

"But what about the races? Ain't yer coming demanded Bill.

"Races be blowed. Thish is good 'nuff fer me."

"Come on, Tom," said Bill in a coaxing voice. "You've had enough."

"No! I'm 'ere fer the day," replied Tom. "An' it's no good shayin' any more. 'Ere!" he yelled to the barman, "bring 'nuther large bottle an' come an' 'ave one with me." The barman put out his hand for the money. Tom



shook it, saying: "You're the sort I like. 'Ave a drink, an' then 'ave 'nuther." Tom pulled out the roll of notes and handed one to the barman. Bill snatched it from him, saying: "This 'ere's a ten pun note."

"Well, what about it?" asked the barman in angry tones.

"Well, I'm going to get the bottle if he will have it, an' see he gits the right change, too." Bill marched to the bar and said: "Give him," pointing to the man, "the same as before," and then placed the note on the table. The change he carefully counted, and returned to the room.

"Here," he said, placing the change before Tom, who was drinking the fresh champagne, "Now count it an' let's get a move on."

Tom picked up the money, extracted a note and pushed it towards the barman, who immediately placed it in his pocket. Bill shook Tom by the shoulder.

"Don't be such a mug for goodness sake. Come on out of here, else you'll lose the lot."

Bill tried to drag him to the door. Tom laughed foolishly as he said: "No good ter me. I'm 'ere fer the day."

Bill let him go. "Well, if your fool enough to lose your money, don't blame me. I'm off to the races. I'll have to get a move on, too, else I'll be too late for the first."

"Orlright," said Tom. "Ta ta."

As soon as Bill left the hotel, a neatly dressed woman approached him and said: "Excuse me; but would you tell my husband that is in there that his wife wants to see him on particular business?"

Bill looked keenly at her. "What's 'is name?"

"Tom Harkins."

"Oh!" said Bill, "so you're Mrs. Harkins, are



you? You're a nice one to go an' leave him the way you did."

The woman burst into tears. I couldn't help it. He got took up with another woman, an' then told me to go, and now he's sold the business that I worked so hard for, and I haven't got a penny piece out of it."

"So that's all you're troubling about," returned Bill bitterly. "You women are all alike. It's money every time."

"It isn't with me," sobbed Mrs. Harkins, 'but it's hard lines that he should have all the money to spend on another woman, and me to have nothing at all."

"Talk sense, do! Tom hasn't taken on with any other woman, an' it's my opinion he doesn't want ter. He's 'ad a sickener o' women the same as me." As Bill finished speaking, he frowned at the recollection of Sarah. "But look here, if you've got any sense, you'll get some o' that money out of him. He's spending it like water."

Mrs. Harkins' tears ceased as she said earnestly: "If only you would help me. You've got a good face, and I'm sure you will. Only go and ask him to see me."

Bill paused, then said: "Oh, orlright, I'll tell him." He turned away and re-entered the hotel.

Tom was leaning over the table, half asleep, with his head on his arms. The barman leant against him, one hand in his side pocket. Bill gave a spring, and with one blow knocked him down. Tom looked up with an owlsh expression, then dropped his head on his arm and closed his eyes. The barman rose. Bill faced him, and the man went out. Bill put his hand into Tom's trousers pocket and drew out the notes. Withdrawing a one pound note from the bundle, he stuffed it back into Tom's pocket

and put the balance into his own. Looking round, he saw the barman with two rough looking men.

"That's him! Go for him, boys!" The two men rushed at Bill. Seeing he had no chance against the three, Bill darted out of the door, across the street to where Mrs. Harkins was standing.

"Quick!" he said. "They're after me." Bill walked briskly on. Mrs. Harkins followed. Soon he stopped and looked round. "I thought they woudn't follow me far," he said. "Come in here."

They entered a cake shop and sat down. After ordering tea for one, Bill said: "We had to go somewhere to count this," drawing from his pocket the money he had taken from Tom. Pausing, he said, "I'm blest if I know what to do for the best. If I give you harf of this, Tom will rouse like hell; then, if I don't he'll spend the lot on drink."

Mrs. Harkins looked pleadingly at Bill, saying: "Well, what you give me I will take care of. I worked very hard at the restaurant, and I think I deserve some of it," pointing to the money.

"Yes," replied Bill. "You do. Even Tom said he couldn't work the business without you." Bill counted the money into two separate amounts. "Here," he said, handing her one and placing the other in an inside pocket, "I reckon it's your share, orlright." Pulling out his watch, he rose, saying: "I'm blowed if I'm not too late for the first race. You have yer tea; I'm off."

Mrs. Harkins caught Bill's hand, saying earnestly: "You're a good friend; thank you ever so much."

Bill gave a half smile. "That's orlright," he said, and hurried away. As he passed a table,

he heard a voice say: "Well, I never!" He looked down, and saw the wrathful face of Violet May. He paused as though to speak, then moved on quickly.

Violet May stirred her tea viciously, muttering: "If 'e was mine, my word I'd give 'im the length of me tongue, see if I wouldn't. Wast-in' 'is money on that there 'ussy," glaring at Mrs. Harkins. "An' as fer 'er why she's no better than she oughter be, takin' money from a married man. My word! It's a good thing Sarah's got rid of 'im." Violet May finished her tea, then rose with a determined air, crossed the room, and sat down opposite to Mrs. Harkins.

"Excuse me," she began in a voice which she intended to be calm, but was full of temper, "But are you aware that the gentleman you was just a talkin' to is a married man?"

"No," returned Mrs. Harkins. "I didnt know that."

"Well then, 'e is, an' 'is wife's a great friend o' mine."

Violet May paused to see the effect of her speech. Mrs. Harkins only nodded.

"And," continued Violet May, her eyes blazing, "I'll 'ave yer know that people as takes money from married men ain't no good. So there!"

Mrs. Harkins did not reply, but sat looking at the speaker. The waitress approached, and tendered her the ticket. Mrs. Harkins made as if to rise, but Violet May interrupted her with: "No you don't! Yer not goin' ter git awiy quite so easy me fine lidy. That there money," pointing to a hand bag, "don't belong to yer at all. It belongs ter me friend, Sarah, so 'and it over ter me. See."

Mrs. Harkins stared at her companion's angry face. "I think you must be mad," she said.

"This money," tapping her bag, "belongs to my husband."

"H-n, I like that," exclaimed Violet May indignantly. "Why I never 'eard o' such a thing. Do yer mean ter tell me that yer husband gave yer that money?"

"Well, he didn't exactly give it to me."

Violet May interrupted with: "No. An' I shouldn't think 'e didn't. The idea! Why I see with me two eyes, as plain as a pike staff, Bill 'and yer a lot o' notes, and yer put 'em in that bag quick an' lively. Now what do yer siy ter that?" and Violet May paused triumphantly.

Mrs. Harkins said: "I think I had better tell you everything."

Violet May smiled grimly as she hitched her chair nearer the table. "I think yer'd better."

Mrs. Harkins, in a few words, told her story. Violet May listened, her face expressing various thoughts. When the tale was told, she said: "Well, I never! O'od 'ave thought o' such a thing. I thought 'e was a real bad'un."

"Bad! Do you mean Mr. Harris?"

"Um-" nodded Violet May.

"I call him one of the best," said Mrs. Harkins warmly. "There's not many men can say 'No' to get drunk when it doesn't cost them a penny, and then to risk getting set on by a gang that's only waiting for a man to get drunk to rob him. I think he's a real good sort. It's a lucky day for my husband when he met him."

Violet May nodded. "'E could be worse. P'r'aps."

The two women rose and left the shop. Violet May walked by the side of her companion for a time in silence, then she said: "It was real mean uv me a'thinkin' all them things o' you, but yer can siy what cher like, it looked dead agen yer, now didn't it?" As she finished, she

looked appealingly into Mrs. Harkins' face.

"Yes," rejoined her companion. "I suppose it did. Never mind, it's all explained now, and there's no harm done. Here is a bank; I'm just in time to open an account with this. Ta ta," smiling and tapping her bag.

Violet May continued walking, her thoughts busy.



## Chapter VII.

Bill arrived on the course just in time to see the second race being run. The winner was a horse that he had fancied, and intended to back, but was too late. Turning to a man, he asked: "What horse won the last race?"

"The favorite o' course," was the reply. "Just because I didn't 'ave anythin' on 'im. Just my luck. I was goin' to put a fiver on 'im, an' then someone chips in an' says 'e 'adn't a hope an' I got a bit nervous and backed a rank outsider," and he continued smilingly: "I wasn't far out, either. The bally thing came second."

Bill did not wait to hear any more, but hurried round to the scratching board.

"Ah!" he breathed, "this is a bit of orlight; I was lucky to meet that feller last night. What a pity I didn't put more on. Anyhow I've won a quid." Bill then compared the numbers of starters and their riders with those in his book, then noted the horses he fancied and went to a bookie.

"What price 'so an' so?' " he asked.

"Ten to one," came the reply in racous tones.

"'Ere's a quid," said Bill, tendering the clerk a one pound note. The clerk snatched it and gave him a card with the initials of the horse and price scribbled on it. Bill hurried to the fence to get a good view of the race. He had some time to wait, but the minutes flew rapidly by. He was planning his winnings so that he could increase them by many more. At last the horses and their riders appeared. It was a pretty sight to see the magnificent animals with their glossy coats and their dainty heads tossing, some pretending to be nervous of the crowd at the rails, others imagining they were

finishing the race before it had begun, the gay suken coats of their riders fluttering on the breeze.

The sight was a fascinating one to those who loved horses. But those who looked on them as a medium for money-making sometimes failed to see the beauty they portrayed. Nevertheless, they were keen to note the action of the horses they particularly fancied.

Bill noted the number of his horse as it cantered by. He was a beauty. As they went to their position at the barrier, Bill's heart beat with excitement. He longed for field glasses, so that he could see their every movement. After fidgeting about a great deal, the horses came into line. Then he heard the shout, "They're off!" Bill singled out his horse from the bunch, then saw him drop back. His heart failed. Oh! that he was on him; he'd make him move. As the horses swept along Bill saw his fancy creeping up nearer to the one in front. As they came to the bend, it was third. Nearer and nearer they came. A shout went up. Bill's horse was second, giving the leader a hard fight. The crowd stood up on the stands, most of them calling to the leader, "Come on, you beauty! Come on!"

Bill clutched the fence with both hands, yelling to his horse to "Come on! Come on!" Neck to neck they raced along until about a yard from the winning post, when Bill's horse dropped back a trifle and the other won by a nose.

A man standing next to Bill said: "By George! what a fine race. The best horse won that time alright."

Bill's face was white with emotion as he answered, hotly: "Be blowed to that, my horse should have won. If I had my way, I'd sack that jockey. He had no business to lose."

The man said: "Did you have much on him?"

"No," answered Bill, "but I stood to win a bit."

"Look here," was the reply. "Take my advice and leave horses alone. They're alright as an amusement, but to make money by them, no! It stands to reason the bookmaker has a whole heap of expenses. He must make them and his profits. It's his business and not an easy one at that. He works hard race days, and other days too. Where does he get his money from? The public, of course. Well, if they're fools enough to bet, they deserve to lose."

Bill made a gesture. 'Here,' he said, "I don't want to listen to you jaw," and moved away. He went to one bookie and asked him the price of the horse he had backed the previous night. He offered him 'five to one.' Bill was delighted at the thought of yesterday's transactions. He felt certain his horse would win.

As he stood near the totalisator and saw the figures increasing rapidly, he grew tremendously excited. Then he joined the queue and soon found himself at one of the windows. Tendering two pounds, he said to the girl: "Two pounds on number twenty one." Quickly he picked up the ticket and passed on. A man, seeing his excited face, asked: "What number are you on, mate?"

Bill replied: "Number twenty one."

"Not a bad horse either, I see. He's dropped to 'three's.'"

Bill replied: "Is that so? I'm sorry I did not put more on him. Know anything good fer the next?"

"My word, I do! You wait here until I get my ticket and I will put you on to a certainty."

Bill waited, and the two men took up their positions at the fence near the winning post. Bill felt he could not see too much of the race

that would begin to make his fortune. As the two men stood they talked of horses and their merits. The stranger was a man who seldom missed a race meeting. To judge by his appearance, racing had not increased his wealth. Yet he held to the faith that some day he would win a pile of money, not realising that each loss decreased it and that he would be obliged to stake more to recover even that which he had lost.

At last the horses made their appearance. To Bill's eyes his fancy seemed superior to any. He became annoyed at their delay in getting away from the barrier. "Look here," he said to his companion, "what they want," pointing to the restless horses and their riders, "is management. The whole system's wrong. You wait till I get going an' I'll show 'em how to do things."

His listener nodded and said: "They want something."

At last they were off. Number twenty one was the last to start. The jockey urged him forward until he caught the others. "Ah!" breathed Bill, his face white, "I thought 'e was a gorner. That was a near thing orlright."

The men round him commented on the bad start. One said: "I tell you he hasn't a ghost of a chance." "The horse is done," said another. A third remarked: "I'm glad I'm not on him; I could say goodbye to my money."

Bill turned savagely on them. "Orlright, orlright! We don't want ter hear what you've got to say."

One man made a threatening gesture, but Bill was again engrossed in the race. As the horses swept in to the straight, number twenty one amongst the bunch, the crowd on the stand stood up and roared the name of the leader. Then Bill saw his horse leave the others and come to the front. The excitement was intense. The crowd yelled and roared encouragement to



the jockey, but alas! for Bill's fortune, number twenty one dropped back, and finished fifth. Bill heard: "Now what did I tell you? I knew from the start the horse was done." Then he heard a woman's voice say: "Perhaps it was all a put up job."

"Wouldn't be a bit surprised. They're up to any trick. My opinion is that horse racing's best left alone unless a fellow has a pound or two to spare and wants a flutter. As for making a fortune on the game. Not on your life."

Bill waited to see the numbers go up on the board, then he pulled out his tickets and tore them up.

"Well, I'm blest if I know how it happened. I made sure I was going to win," he said to his companion.

"And so did I," came the reply. "I put my last shilling on it and now I haven't any money left to put on this," pointing to a number. "I came out to back it. I got it straight from the owner, who is a personal friend of mine. They stand to win quite a pile."

Bill looked at the number and then the name. "It's a rank outsider. 'I've never heard of him.'"

"No; for the good reason the owners have kept him dark. I wonder if you will mind lending me a note? I will give it to you after the race. The horse is sure to win. It couldn't lose."

Bill handed him a one pound note. The man took it. "It's a pity you could not make it two while you are about it."

"No," returned Bill, "I've lost quite enough. Five pounds last night, one on the third race, two just now, and one to you. That's nine." Bill shivered at the thought.

"This is not lost," said his companion. "Come



on, and I will take you to my bookie. He gives the best odds."

BOTH men went round to the bookmakers' stand and listened to the yelling voices, each shouting their odds. Bill passed his acquaintance, he asked. "It was hard luck our horse ance of the previous night. "How did you get just being pipped at the post. Never mind, better luck next time. What are you on for this."

Bill named the horse.

"Not a baddie either, but" pointing to another number, "this is the winner for the next."

Bill shook his head. "I don't like it."

"I tell you," insisted the speaker, "that horse will win. Anyhow, put a half a note on for a saver, and you will have two horses running in this race. I tell you that's the only way to recover."

Bill paused. "Not a bad idea. Here," pulling out his money, extracting a ten shilling note and giving it to his adviser, "I'll take your advice this time. Let's hope that one of the two will win."

"What about backing your first fancy with me? I'll give you the best odds."

Bill shook his head. "No," he said, "my friend here is going to get me the best."

Bill was too engrossed in his race book to see the look that was exchanged between the two men.

"You wait here," said the man to whom he had lent the pound note, "I'll go and see what my man will give on this," pointing to number seventeen. The man disappeared. Soon he returned. "The prices have dropped to 'tens,'" he said.

"I'll give you 'twelves,'" said the other man quickly; "you can't do better than that."

"No," said Bill. "That seems fair enough."

Orlright, I'll take it. Now," he said, as he took his ticket, "if this horse comes home I stand ter win twelve quid, an' one I won before, that makes thirteen. That will make me six to the good. Not as good as I expected, but not so bad."

"I call that real good for one afternoon. Besides, there are a couple more, and for the last race I've a friend who is going to let me in on something absolutely certain. I've got to meet him five minutes before the horses go out and he says that if the horse is ready, for me to put on my last shilling. Now, I don't mind letting you in on this for lending me the note. It was awfully good of you."

"Wait here a bit," he continued, "I haven't backed number seventeen yet." He disappeared, and returned smiling.

"You didn't go far," remarked Bill.

"No," came the reply, "I backed with your man. He gives better prices even than mine. You're a new chum arn't you?"

"Yes," replied Bill.

"I thought so. But you can't beat them for winning."

"I haven't done much so far," returned Bill in a gloomy voice.

"You wait, my boy, till the end of the day. Now, take my advice, and whatever you win keep it until the last race, then put that and all you can spare on the horse I will tell you of, and I'll bet you any money you like you will come home a hundred to the good. That's the way to make money."

Bill nodded.

The race that followed was a most exciting one to Bill, and his companion. After following with their eyes number seventeen and shouting encouragement as they saw the horse leading into the straight, their voices died away as

they watched him fall back and others take the lead. Then, as they neared the winning post, Bill's companion yelled: "Come on, you beauty! Come on!"

As the first horse passed the winning post, he turned to Bill saying: "Our horse won! Hooray! I've won twelve quid."

"But that's not your horse; you backed seventeen," said Bill.

"No I didn't. When I went back, I put the note on that. I thought he stood a better chance than mine," pointing to the winner, who was just entering to be weighed.

Bill felt somehow that he had been tricked. "Well, anyhow, I've won some, too."

As they collected their money, the bookmaker said hurriedly: "Come back later. I've got something real good for the next."

The two men went away to a quiet spot and sat down on the grass. Bill opened his race book and entered the amount of his winnings. As he noted his loss of three pounds on the afternoon's racing, he scratched his head. "Now, isn't that wonderful? I've had two wins, and yet I'm out three quid."

"Never mind, you're sure to win something on the next, and that will pull you round. Now what you want to do is to put a goodish bit on this," pointing to the next race marked in the book, "and then to put the lot on the last. It's your only hope to make a bit."

Bill nodded. "I can see that," he said.

Both men returned to the bookmaker. To Bill he said in low tones: "Put a decent bit on this," pointing to number five. "It's a tryer. It will go out evens, you mark my words."

Bill replied: "I don't want to put too much on this, as I fancy I have somethin' good on for the last."

"What is it?"

"My friend here is goin' ter put me in the know just before the race," said Bill.

"Before you do any backing come to me, and I'll tell you if it has a chance."

"I will, and thanks," said Bill. "Here," handing to the bookmaker a one pound note. "I don't think I'll risk more than this for this race."

"Quite right," replied the bookmaker's clerk, as he made out the ticket, 'keep a tidy sum and put on all you've got for the next.'

Bill nodded. "Yes," he said. "That's what I'm going to do."

His companion said: "As I have won on the last race, I don't think I will risk any on this race, but I'll put all I've got on the next one. Here's your note, and thank you very much."

"Thanks," said Bill. "I don't mind lending when I get it back again."

"I too. If you should be stuck at any time, and I have it, it will be my pleasure to lend it to you. Bye the bye, I do not know your name. Mine is," he stopped to feel in his pocket, "ah!" he continued, "I have come without my pocket book, but my name is Captain Wishopp."

Bill was much impressed. He had guessed his companion to be an educated man, but he had scarcely hoped to converse in such a friendly manner with a Captain. Bill thought: "If only Sarah could see me now. She would be very sorry for what she had done."

"I served in the Boer War," his companion continued. "Got a mention or two," but, with a laugh and a shrug of his shoulders, "for only a small matter." He did not add that the army was glad to be rid of his services, and removed him speedily as possible; also his captaincy. "The horses are out and at the post. We must try and get a decent position."

Before they could sight them the horses had started, and as the distance was only a short



one the crowd was yelling the leader's name as the horses swept into the straight. Bill tried to push his way through the crowd before the race was over, and succeeded in seeing number five first past the winning post. As he joined his companion, he said: "What a pity I didn't put more on 'im."

The captain was biting his nails in rage. "Just my confounded luck. I ought to have known this was my lucky day. Lately I have had a run of bad luck, and lost a bit, and to-doy is the first time for weeks that I happened to strike it. However, I will pick up on the next."

Bill hurried round to his friend the bookmaker, and collected three pounds. He felt pleased and excited at the win. The clerk said: "Don't forget to let me know about the next."

"My word, no!" replied Bill. "You've put me on to two winners. It was my own fault I did not put more on them. Next time I'll have a bit o' sense."

"That's the ticket," agreed the bookmaker.

Later the captain and Bill wandered to the scratching board and noted the names and positions of the horses and their riders. Bill felt restless as the time grew near for the race to be run. He reminded his companion of his appointment. The captain looked at the clock, and ten minutes before the starting time he hurried away. To Bill, it seemed ages before he appeared in the distance. The captain waved his hand excitedly, and as Bill hurried to him, panted: "We're just in time. Come on quickly. Put all you've got on him. He's out to win." "Here," thrusting some notes into the bookmaker's hand, "twelve pounds on this," pointing to a number in the book. "I'm blest if I can say the bally name." The clerk scribbled a number on a ticket and handed it to him.



"I'll have ten quid on it, too," said Bill excitedly.

"That's no good! Put more than that on it. I tell you it can't possibly lose. I've put every penny I've got on him. Put fifty pounds on him. Quickly! Or else we will be too late."

Bill shook his head. "Haven't got it. This is all I have."

"That will do, then."

Bill extracted three notes. "Here," he said, handing the remainder to the bookmaker, "Quick! Gimme the ticket." Snatching it, he thrust it and the three notes into his pocket, and he and his companion hurried to view the race. It was in full progress, the horses turning into the straight for the winning post.

"Where's ours?" asked Bill excitedly.

"Lying third. Ah! here he comes. He's first! By jove! he wins. Yes, he does! He's home! Hooray!" cried the captain, his face working with excitement.

Bill felt for a moment as if he would faint, as he saw his number go up. They were the first to wait upon the bookmaker. Bill felt irritated at the slow movements of the clerk as he opened his book. The bookmaker called: "I pay on the winner of the last race."

Bill thrust out his ticket. The clerk took it and spoke the number. The bookmaker said: "That's not the winner," and pushed the ticket away. Bill could not believe his ears. The clerk handed him back the ticket. Bill snatched it and examined the scrawling initials on it, then looked at his book. They tallied with the name of the horse under the winning number. Bill felt as if he could drop to the ground. Looking up, he saw the captain collecting some money. Rage possessed him. Thrusting the crowd aside, which had now gathered to collect on their win, he sprang at the bookmaker.

The clerk caught him and swung him aside. "Here, we don't want any of that. You get out of this."

The crowd surged about them, trying to see and hear the disturbance. A policeman appeared. "What's all this about," he asked.

Bill, his face livid with rage, said: "That feller there," pointing to the bookmaker, "has done me out of my money. I won on the last race and he won't give it to me."

"Have you got your ticket?" asked the policeman briskly.

"Yes," replied Bill, handing him the ticket. "But he rung in another horse on me, not the one I asked for."

The policeman looked at the ticket, then gave it to Bill, saying: "Look here, young man, that's not the initials of the horse that won."

"No, I know it isn't, and it's not the horse I backed."

The policeman shrugged his shoulders. "Did you ask for this one?" pointing to the name of the winner in the book.

"No, I didn't, but my friend there backed it first, an' I gave him," pointing to the bookmaker "thirty quid to put on the same horse an' now-" The policeman interrupted with: "Was that the man who told you what to back?" nodding in the direction of the captain.

"Yes," replied Bill, "but he's orlright. It's that damn bookie that's rooked me, an' I going to get even with him."

The policeman smiled as he said: "You can't do anything in this case. That fellow," looking at the captain, who had retired in the background, "is a tout, and works hand and glove with that bookie. He's looking for 'melons' like you, and they're easy to find, too. That fellow's cute enough to keep within the mark, but it's a poor lookout for those that get taken

in. Take my tip and keep away from the race-course, unless you want to lose all you've got."

Bill's face was full of misery as he realised he had lost all but three pounds.

"I've lost all but this," he said, pulling out the three notes.

The policeman said: "You're lucky to have as much as that. I tell you horse racing is no good to make money, unless you have sufficient to stand a run of bad luck, and you don't depend upon it for your bread and butter. Even then it's bound to beat you in the end."

"But I haven't even begun yet," wailed Bill. At the thought that his hopes of a speedy fortune were at an end, he felt savage. "It's all that blighter." Bill made a quick movement, as if to go in pursuit of the captain, but the policeman held his arm.

"No good, old man; that won't bring your money back. He," nodding at the captain, "worked an old trick on you, but the law can't touch him, for you've got no proof. While people are fool enough to pick up with strangers at the racecourse, they must expect to be taken down. My advice to you is keep away from horse racing if you think to make money. There's only a few that do and I don't think you're one of them. Come on, and get out of the crowd."

Bill replied, as they strolled towards the gates: "I haven't yet, but I'm going to."

The policeman laughed as he said: "I didn't expect you to take my advice. No one ever takes advice until it gets him real down and out. I was mad on it myself a few years ago, but it beat me in the end, and I lost nearly every bean I had. Then I woke up. Still, I have a bet occasionally, now and then, and sometimes I win; more often I lose, but I won't risk much. The game's too uncertain."

By this time they had reached the gates.

"Good day," said the policeman. Bill mumbled something, and walked on. He was feeling utterly miserable and dejected. He realised what a fool he had been and how easily he had been taken in by a sharper whose business it was to look for fools.

### Chapter VIII.

As he boarded a tram, he suddenly realised he was hungry and thirsty. He had had nothing to eat since his breakfast, and only two glasses of champagne to drink. Excitement had driven away all thoughts of food. He alighted near his lodgings and entered the eating house that Tom had sold the previous day. Already there was an improvement in the appearance of the place. The table that Bill sat at was clean and well arranged. There were even flowers in small vases on each table. Mag, her face clean and her hair tidy, approached in brisker movements.

She smiled at Bill as she presented a menu card. "Some style 'ere, I can tell yer, with the menoo an' flowers an' what not; but I'm fed up with it all." Her voice and manner changed as the new owner approached. "Will yer give us yer order, please?"

Bill scanned the card. "I'll have grilled steak, an' a good lump of it, too," he said.

"Yer'll 'ave ter wite till it's cooked."

"'Ow long?" asked Bill.

"Bout ten minutes."

"I can't wait. I'm dead hungry."

"'Ave some soup, then. It's real good. She," nodding in the direction of the owner, who had returned to the desk to receive payment, is not a bad cook. Sacked the chinkie 'cause 'e didn't do things 'er way. I'll tell yer more later."

"Hurry up there, please, there's people waiting," came a brisk voice.

"I'm a 'urryin., I can't be no quicker," returned Mag, but in a milder manner than Bill thought possible. She soon returned with a large plate of soup. Bill attacked it, drink-



ing down as speedily as the heat would allow. "Ah!" he breathed, as he cleaned the plate with a piece of bread, "I wanted that. It was not too bad. She's some cook, orlight. Even though she looks a nark." He looked round the room. "I don't see 'er—she must be cookin' that steak o' mine. Good business."

Mag appeared with a plate in her hand. "There," she said as she placed it in front of him. "Some steak that. The missus knows 'ow ter cook orlight. But what a nark. I've 'ad a'ell of a time since she took it over."

Bill did not reply. He was enjoying his food, which was really delicious. The plate was cleaned so thoroughly that Mag replied as she returned to remove it: "If it wasn't for 'er," meaning her employer, "we wouldn't be kothered awashin' it, but she's that pertickler, must 'ave everythin' put in water, when a dry wipe's just as good. Let me tell yer I won't be 'ere long."

"I dunno," said Bill, whose hunger had by this time eased off. "You might do worse. And it's not a bad idea to know how to cook a bit. Seen anything of Tom to-day?"

"No," replied Mag, pretending to tidy the table so that she could linger without being reprimanded. "'E was a bit full last night, but didn't cher go to the races together?"

"No," said Bill. "I left him in the pub, full as a tick. Couldn't shift him, an' went off on me own."

"'Ow did yer get on?"

At the thought of his losses, Bill groaned. "Get on! why I've lost the blooming lot."

"Yer don't say. Gee! that's rotten. S-s-h. Will yer 'ave anythin' ter foller?" handing him the card.

Bill was still hungry. "Yes," he said, "I'll have some rice pudden."

Mag left him, soon returning with the sweet. Bill enjoyed it. It was good. After he had eaten, he leaned back and pulled out his pipe, filled it, then struck a match and lit it. "Ah!" he sighed. "I feel better now."

A sharp voice at his elbow aroused him. "I don't allow smoking here." He looked up to see the new owner standing at his side. "If you've finished your meal, pay for it, then smoke your pipe outside."

"Oh that's it, is it," Bill answered, with his pipe still between his lips, and an' ugly gleam in his eyes. "I'll finish my pipe while I'm at it. How much do I owe you for me tucker." The woman named a sum. Bill pulled out some silver and pushed it towards her saying: "The food's real good missus, and I enjoyed it. It's the best I've had these two days."

"That's right, but you put that pipe out. I won't allow anyone to smoke in here while there's food about," she replied briskly.

Bill went on smoking. He was in no humor to be ordered to do anything contrary to his wishes.

"Do you hear what I say," she demanded.

Bill drew a deep breath, then slowly blew the smoke through his lips, without replying.

"Did you hear what I said?" again she demanded. "I won't have you or anyone smoke here. Do you hear me?"

Bill sat up and withdrew the pipe from his mouth. "I 'eard yer. I couldn't help it," he said bitterly. "My Lord! to think there's such women about. No wonder they drive the husbands to drink."

"Look here! I don't want any of your impudence. Out you go."

Bill leaned back in an irritating manner, and said: "What if I don't choose ter go? What then?"

"I'll soon shift yer," she answered, as she turned quickly away.

Bill rose. "Orlight, orlight. I'm going." The woman walked to the door with him. Bill paused as he reached the door and said: "What you want is a damn good hiding', an' I'd like to be the man to give it to you.

The woman gave an angry laugh as she said: "H-n, you! You call yourself a man! Why, you're nothing of the sort. For the future, don't darken my doors again, if you please."

"Don't fret about that. I wouldn't come into your blooming place again," retorted Bill.

"A good thing, too," came the answer

Bill was angry. He had had a very disturbing day. The last scene had put the clinax on everything. As he walked to his lodgings, he thought: "The only decent place to get a good meal he had yet found, and then a woman with a hell of a temper had forbidden him to enter it again, and all because he wanted to smoke his pipe. At home, he had smoked where he pleased. The thought of home brought all his troubles to his mind. Three pounds would not last long. Then he remembered Tom, and the money he carried. He felt for it. It was safe. Bill sighed with relief. Somehow he half expected to find it gone. He wondered where Tom was. He felt sure he would call on him in the morning. He sighed when he shut his bedroom door. Lying in bed, he reviewed the events of the day. He tossed uneasily and cursed himself for being so easily caught by sharpers. If only he had followed his own cautious way, he would not have lost so heavily. Now he only had three pounds left. That would not last long at the rate he was spending; especially on food. He frowned as he remembered the incident of the eating house. A pity he had not done at first as the woman had asked, then

he could get a decent meal, at small cost. For the first time for many months he gave credit to Sarah for good management. Her cooking he had been accustomed to, and had taken as a matter of course. He wondered where she had gone. At last he fell into an uneasy sleep, in which he dreamed that he was riding the horse that he had backed so heavily, and that he was nearing the winning post, when the horse fell. He awakened to find himself on the floor with the sheet grasped in his two hands. He picked himself up, and by the aid of matches remade the bed. He cursed aloud as his troubles haunted him. A loud hammering at the door awakened him. He opened it.

Tom entered, his face bloated and dirty. He looked miserable. "What 'appened ter yer yesterday? I remember yer an' me 'avin' champagne, an' the next thing I knew was me wakin' up in the park without a bean. Some blighter went and pinched the lot. Nearly three 'undred quid." Tom was too full of his troubles to see the expression on Bill's face as he continued: "It's nearly two years since I went on a bender, an' the first time I do, blest if I don't lose every cent I've got. If only the wife 'ad stuck ter me, that wouldn't 'ave 'apened."

"I dunno so much about that," said Bill. "I tried my level best to get you to come along, but you were dead to the world. Then I left you and met yer wife outside." Tom looked up sharply. "Me an' her had a chip together, an' then I came back to find that hound of a barman with his hand in your pocket. I landed him a beauty. Tom breathed heavily. "I took the notes out o' your pocket, and just then in walks the barman and two of 'is mites. I knew I hadn't a hope, but did a get-away as fast as I could. Your wife joined me down the street,



and we went inter a cake shop and halved the money."

Before he could continue any further, Tom interrupted with: "Yer did what?"

Bill repeated the last sentence.

"Yer gave 'er 'alf me money? 'Ow did yer know she was me wife? It might 'ave been a put up job." Bill felt faint. He had never thought of that possibility.

"What was she like?" demanded Tom anxiously.

"A little thing, neatly dressed, with not too much to say."

"That's 'er," sighed Tom with relief. "So she's got 'alf as she. P'raps it's fer the best. I never was no good to keep money, 'especialy when I got a few drinks in me. 'And it over."

Bill took the roll of notes and handed them to Tom; then he told him the amount he had given to the barman.

Tom said: "I've a good mind to get 'em back agen. Any'ow I'm glad I'm not stony." Holding out his hand to Bill, he said: "Shake! You're one of the best." They shook hands. Bill then told him all that had happened at the races.

Tom listened in silence until Bill had finished, and said: "Well, can yer beat that? If I 'ad been with yer they never would 'ave got yer so easy. But, I dunno," he continued, "I got 'ad in 'nother way some years ago when I first came ter Sydney. Those fellers can spot a new chum as easy as winkin' an' they never play the same game twice. My word! they're sharp."

"A bit too sharp for my liking," replied Bill in gloomy tones.

"Never mind," said Tom. "You stuck to me an' could 'a' done me out o' the lot; now I'll stick ter yer. I'll chuck up the drink, but we'll



go out to the course on Wednesday an' 'ave a flutter. Come on, an' we'll 'ave breakfast at the old shop. The chinkie p'raps 'ill cook better than 'e did fer me, though the wife could manage 'im alright."

Bill then told him of his experience of the night before.

"Whew! Yer did cut up rough. But I knew when she paid me the balance she was a tartar. The fuss she kicked up over a bit o' dirt in the kitchen! Any'ow, if yer say the food's good, it's worth the risk of a black look. When yer married yer get plenty o' them an' one more or less don't matter. By the bye," continued Tom in a careless voice, "did the wife say where she was stayin', or what she was goin' ter do with the money?"

"No," replied Bill. "I was in a hurry to get away."

Tom entered the eating house first, Bill following as closely as he could.

"Good morning, Mrs. Treviss," said Tom rather sheepishly, "This is me friend Mr. 'Arris. 'E was a bit 'asty last night, so 'e tells me, an' we've come ter get a bit t'eat. 'E was a tellin' me," continued Tom with an ingratiating smile, "as 'ow the food was first class; an' the place as sweet as a nut."

"Well, it's a bit different to when I took it over."

"Well, yer see I was workin' it single 'anded. The wife left me suddent."

"I don't wonder. You men don't appreciate a good wife till she's gone. Anyhow," she added, "You had better sit down."

"I think she's right there," said Tom. "We don't think enough o' them when we got 'em. I know this, that I'm goin ter try an' find mine. What say you?"

Bill did not reply.

## Chapter IX.

To Sarah, the day's rest in bed tended by the kindly care of Mrs. Straat, was the one thing necessary to avert a complete breakdown.

Violet May called in the evening. "I've got cher ticket for the mountings. My word! I gave it 'ot an' strong ter that tuppeny 'apenny fine gentleman be'ind the window. I ses to 'im: 'Gimme one second clars ticket ter—er—er, an' fer the life o' me I couldn't think o' the name o' the station. I stood there just like a fool, an' then 'e ses the very worst thing 'e could siy. 'E ses: "Urry up, miss, I can't wite 'ere all diy.' Now yer know," continued Violet May appealingly, "'Ow that word 'Urry up' upsets me. I got quite 'ot all over. 'Look 'ere!" I ses to 'im, jest like that, 'I don't want none o' yer cheek young feller-me-lad, else I'll come be'ind the winder an' give yer somethin' fer yer cheek.' All 'e ses was: 'Come on, come on, where do yer want ter go ter?' an' when I goes ter explain the ticket wasn't fer me, 'e ses: 'I don't want ter 'ear oo's the ticket fer!' Then 'e thumps 'is 'and on the ledge: 'Where do yer want ter go ter?' Jest then up walks a bobby. 'Move on! move on! an' don't block the winder,' 'e ses. Someone pushed me from be'ind, an' calls: 'One excursion return to Ka-toomba.' I ses: 'That's the plice fer me!' I pushes the party as pushed me, fair in the stum-muck, an' grabs me ticket quick an' lively an' got awiy."

Mrs. Straat and Sarah laughed heartily at the vivid description.

"It tikes me," continued Violet May triumphantly, "ter give them young whippersnappers

somehin' ter go on with. They don't get no change outer me."

Sarah smiled as she took the ticket and placed it in her purse, saying: "It's very good of you, Violet. Thank you. To-morrow I will go by the midday train and stay a week at the boarding house, then perhaps look for a position in Katoomba. Did you put that notice in the "Herald" last night, Violet?"

"I did," replied Violet May. "An' after I gives it ter the man be'ind the counter, someone started singin': 'Say Oo Revor, but not good bye.' I looked round, and there was a cheeky bit of a boy 'oo must 'ave caught sight of the paper in me 'and an' read it. I turns me back on 'im an' takes no notice. Jest as I walks outer the door, 'e ses: 'Good night, Sarah!' I pokes me tongue out at 'im. 'E only larfed. There's no breedin' in them Orstralians, that's my opinion."

"Ach! dat iss not sso," interrupted Mrs. Straat. "I haffe met mit mooch kaindness from dem. But so many ov re peoples here dey do not lofe to vork laike te Dutch. Een my coontrie men an' voomans vork all te day. Here, not sso. Eet iss a lofly coontrie to make mooch money, but ach! eet iss sso deerty mit te dust dat fly eferyvheres." The two women agreed. They both knew how difficult it was to keep a house clean from it.

"Vat iss de moontains laike dat hass te name off Kat-Kat-Katoompa? Does dat means dat dey preed de pussycat dere?"

Sarah laughed at the quaint idea. "No," she replied, "I have not heard how the town came by its name, but I hear it is quite a large place, with wonderful scenery. I will tell you all about it when I write to you."

The next morning, Sarah was up bright and

early. After breakfast she called on Mrs. Ellis and thanked her for her many kindnesses.

Mrs. Ellis said: "Now Sarah, don't fret about that husband of yours. While he has plenty of money in his pocket, he will not suffer in the least. Only when that is gone will he realise what a good wife you were to him. It will no doubt be the making of him. You have guarded him too well since his illness. Enjoy your well earned holiday. Jones will see you into the train." Mrs. Ellis kissed her and promised to write to Sarah if she saw Bill, and Sarah went away comforted.

Mrs. Straat and Violet May went to the station to bid her farewell. As they were about to pass through the gate on to the platform, a ticket examiner said: "Show your tickets." Sarah tendered hers and was about to pass on when he stopped her with: "This is not an excursion train, madam. You will either have to wait for one, or else pay the extra. Now move on to one side, please."

Violet May, who was slightly in the rear and could not hear all that had been said, hustled forward.

"What's all this about? I got the ticket with these two 'ands o' mine, so I know it's good."

"Yes, yes," said Sarah soothingly, "come out of the way." They moved to one side. Sarah told her the reason of the delay.

Violet May snorted: "Gimme the ticket an' I'll change it while yer wite 'ere."

"No," said Sarah. "I will do it." So saying, she hurried away.

Violet May turned to Mrs. Straat and said: "The idea! Why I never 'eard o' such a thing. It's them politishions that's up to their tricks. As if one ticket isn't as good as another. If that was me, I wouldn't 'ave paid it, would yer?"

Mrs. Straat nodded her head: "Jah! jah! I would haffe paid it, for eef I did not do sso dey would maybe take me off to te prison, an' den dat would haffe been mooch trouble."

Violet May tossed her head saying: "Pity 'elp the one that tries it on with me. I'd make it 'ot fer 'im."

Sarah returning put an end to the discussion. "Here are two platform tickets in case they won't let you go through without one, and they changed mine without any fuss. I had very little difference to pay."

Sarah and Mrs. Straat passed on to the platform without a word, but Violet May could not resist as she thrust the ticket into the collector's hand. "'Ere me ticket, an' a lot o' good may it do yer chargin' ter walk on to yer miserable platform."

The man took the ticket, gazed after Violet May, and murmured: "That one's got a lot to say. Good thing she doesn't belong to me."

Sarah found a compartment with a vacant seat. Violet May entered to place the luggage into the rack. In the excitement she stepped heavily on to a youth's foot.

"Here, mind where you walk, please," he said crossly, "that's my foot when you've done with it."

Violet May glared. "I can't 'elp it if yer foot's that big its a sprawlin' all over the place. Why don't cher sit on it? Then folks might git a chanct ter walk."

"Sh-sh," whispered Sarah. "Don't say anything more."

The youth crimsoned, and was about to continue when his companion nudged him to keep silent. It was with difficulty he did so, especially when Violet May turned to leave the carriage and made an elaborate survey of the floor. As the bell rang, Violet May snatched at Sarah



and gave her a loving kiss; then Mrs. Straat did the same.

"Mind yer write ter me first thing," cried Violet May, and as the train began to move she threw a kiss at the youth and said waggishly: "Don't fergit ter do as I told yer fer the futcher." The youth's face turned more crimson yet as he pulled a face at her. Violet May called loudly: "Mind yer don't git struck that wiy" and laughed.

Mrs. Straat, in spite of her heavy manner, loved anything funny. Her big figure shook with laughter. "You vill off te deate off me pe, I laffe sso mooch."

## Chapter X.

The week that followed was a revelation to Sarah. Each day she would go with a house party and view the wonderful sights. She would rise early to see the mists that rose from the valleys. It was all so wonderful to her, being born and bred in London and having had so little money to spend on holidays. Many times she wished that Bill was with her, so that they could enjoy it together. At the thought of Bill, Sarah would sigh and think: "Perhaps he would not trouble to walk to the beauty spots," and she couldn't imagine him rising early to see the mists. People like Bill missed a lot in life she thought. She decided to stay at the comfortable boarding house another week. She felt happier, for she had received a letter, which read:

"My deer Sarah

I takes me pen in me and an rites ter yer hopping it leves yer wel as it dose me at present. larst satterdy i saw yore usbund torikin to a wumman an then gives er a sum a monney. wen e ad gorn awiy i ups an at er an after a bit i got the ful strenth uv it. E ad taken it frum er drunken usbund so as ter sive it frum theeves an then e gives the wife arf without so much as arsk-in the usband is cornsent. the wife was so glad she thinks the world uv im. it wasnt to bad uv im i dont think. write agin an tell me all about ow you is engoyin yerself. lots uv love an XXXXXX from yer luvin Violet May."

Sarah's eyes filled with tears as she finished reading the letter. Dear Bill! how dearly she loved him, in spite of his lazy ways. She thought of writing to Violet May and asking her to find him, or inserting an advertisement in the "Herald." As she grew calmer she realised what a foolish step that would be. No! she would wait until he made the first move to-

wards making a home and providing for her. Besides, he had not expressed any regret at parting with her that day she had hidden in the kitchen. She wisely decided he must make the first move. The thought then entered her mind that perhaps he didn't want to make another home and to be burdened with home ties. She wondered if he really cared sufficiently for her to work steadily and so save money. It meant a tremendous strain for one of his character. Each day she would eagerly scan the personal column of the "Herald" for a message, but as the week merged into the fortnight, Sarah gave up hope.

Violet May did not refer to him in any of her later letters. The rest from work and worry made a marked difference in Sarah's feelings and appearance; but she grew alarmed at the rapid disappearance of her money. During the fortnight she had joined the merry house party in motor drives, and the little incidentals of bright company determined to enjoy herself regardless of cost. At the end of the second week, Sarah inserted an advertisement in the local paper for a position as cook, stating that she thoroughly understood cooking in all its branches. When she called at the post office she was surprised at the number of letters handed to her. She walked on until she crossed the line, then sat on a seat in the park. Mixing up the letters in her lap, she murmured: "Now I shall see if the first one will be lucky." She opened it and read:

"If S H will kindly call at such and such address and if credentials and ability satisfactory she will be engaged immediately. Excellent salary."

Sarah placed that on one side. She liked the tone of it. After reading all the others, she returned to the first one. "I'm off to-morrow to see about my first situation," she said to her-

self, and smiled at the thought of her nervousness when on her first visit to Mrs. Ellis. What a lot had happened since and what a kind friend she had found in her. She noted the address on the letter, and made arrangements with a man to call on the morrow and drive her to the address. Arriving at the boarding house she found two letters awaiting her. She opened first the one from Violet May. She read:

“My deer Sarah

Theres such eeps as appened ere that I dont know ow to begin. First uv all i sees yer usbund standin outside a pitcher show with a strange wumman. It pulls me up short. Then they goes inside i with em. The two uv em as a chip. i tries me level yest to ear what they as to say but its no good, then e ands er somethin. it looks ter me like a address, fer she tries ter ave a squint at it in the arf dark, then she pockets it an after that she gives is and a squeeze an ses somethin nice. e seemed ter like it fer e larfed an then e went out by issself. I ups an sits in the same seat as e ad so as ter know er agin. Then I chips in a bit an soon we gits a bit friendly. i chaffs er about im, she tells me as ow er sister was married to is friend an that they was parted an she was brekin er neck ter git back to im so she the sister made erself known ter yer usbund an gits the address so as ter meet er usbund axedental like, so as ter make it up agin. She told me as ow yer usband lorst all is monney the first day at the races but won a bit on the secund an is frend Tom was a bit too smart and lorst nearly all e ad the first day e went out. Be the third day the two uv em was stony at least Bill was. Is frend Tom ad a few pounds left but not many. the two uv em as ad a sikener uv orse racin an swears theyve dun with the game. i shud think so to. anyow me an er parted the best uv frends an shes goin ter let me no ow things stand with yer usbund.

Oo revoor,  
Yours with luv,  
Violet May.

I thort uv askin er fer yer usbunds address but she might ave shut up like a oister and that wud ave been the end uv things.

V. M.

It was with mixed feelings that Sarah finished reading the letter. So Bill had lost all his



money. How hard it had been to earn, and how quickly it had flown. What would he do now? He would be obliged to work. She wondered if Bill would return to boiler making. She thought not. It was too hard for him in his present condition. Her first impulse was to write to Violet May and send her a small sum of money to be given to Bill at the first opportunity. She sat down and began to write—then she stopped. She would advertise in the "Herald" and arrange a meeting with Bill. At the thought of seeing him, her heart beat faster. All the love she felt filled her with longing to comfort and protect him. His faults were momentarily forgotten. Tears filled her eyes. She felt lonely. Her nature needed someone to tend and care for. Then she thought of the past two years. The tears dried in her eyes as she remembered Bill's selfish ways and laziness, his hardness of manner towards her and his lack of affection, and lastly the scene in the kitchen, and his first thought for himself and his pleasure. No! she would not advertise. It was best to leave him at present to follow his own way. He would sink to the level of a tramp, or the necessity of money would be a spur to earn it and so force him to raise himself. She decided to write to Violet May a long letter telling her amongst other things to try and find Bill's address and if possible to let her know of his progress. She longed for Violet May's next letter.

The following day she drove to the address on the letter she had selected among the many answers. When the ancient vehicle stopped at the handsome entrance, Sarah alighted and entered the gate marked: "Tradesmen's entrance." She could not but admire the beautiful garden with its gravel path kept in such good order, nor the flow-



ers that grew in profusion in the well arranged beds. As she neared the house, she thought of her first visit to Mrs. Ellis and remembered how nervous she had felt. To-day somehow she did not feel afraid. Her body felt rested and the fearful anxiety and strain that she had passed through now seemed a dream. She rang the bell of the side door, which was partly open—no one answered it. As she waited, she heard a sweet, plaintive voice say:

“Norah, I am too tired to do any more. You will really have to finish the rest yourself. I am going to my room.”

“But Joy, I simply cannot get through all this work. I too am tired. Do, like a dear, stay and help me.”

Sarah again rang the bell. Neither speaker heard it. The first voice out: “You know very well that . . . . .”

“I will not do another thing, so it’s no use asking me.” The speaker came into view. She was an exceptionally pretty girl, hardly out of her teens. Her face wore that moment a decided pout. She paused as she saw Sarah, then she called: “Norah!”

“Yes, dear,” came the answer in sweet tones. Not receiving an immediate reply, the owner of the voice appeared. As she saw Sarah standing at the door, she came forward and asked with a smile: “Is there anything you require?”

Sarah looked into the sweet, rather grave face of the speaker and smiled. “I am Sarah Harris, who advertised in the local paper for a position as cook.”

Sarah felt the eyes of the girl look keenly at her, then she heard: “I am so glad you called. Our cook left rather hurriedly some days ago, and my sister and I have been obliged to do everything ourselves. Come in.” Sarah

entered the side hall and followed the speaker into a large kitchen. One of the tables bore evidence of a dinner in partial preparation.

"Will you sit down, please, while I prepare this pudding. It should have been boiling before this, according to the cookery book. I am not accustomed to cooking though I have learnt it."

"Let me help you," said Sarah, preparing to remove her gloves. Norah smiled as she said:

"I wish you would, and then we can talk things over."

While they worked they talked. Sarah learnt that the previous cook had been secretly drinking, and through her mischief-making the housemaid had given notice, and had taken with her her sister, who helped her in the house. Visitors were expected that evening, and Norah was obliged to fill the gap as well as she could. Her mother was upstairs lying down, not equal to the strain of the worry and additional work. As Sarah listened in silence, her admiration of Norah grew, for she guessed by what she had overheard, and little pauses in the voice, that Norah's life was not a bed of roses. Delicately, Sarah's name was asked, also her reference was read, and after a short silence Norah said:

"I will be very pleased if you will come to us. I wish you could begin to-morrow. I know I am asking a great favor, but I really am so tired of the cooking and the work."

"If you wish, I will stay to-night and help you," said Sarah.

Norah gasped: "Oh! I wish you would. It would relieve me of so much anxiety. Thank you very much. What about the vehicle? Is the driver waiting to take you back again?"

"Yes," answered Sarah. "I will tell him to come for me to-morrow and I will pack my clothes and return with them."

Sarah did so, and returned to find Norah looking much happier. Quickly the two prepared the dinner, Sarah asking questions and receiving directions where to find the necessary things to cook with. She rather wondered why the mother had not put in an appearance. Later Joy entered. She had changed her afternoon dress for a pretty, dainty one in which she looked charming. Norah said: "This is Mrs. Harris, who has kindly consented to remain this evening and help us." Joy shrugged her shoulders and did not reply or glance at Sarah. She evidently considered neither were sufficiently important for her to notice.

"Mother wants you in the bedroom at once, Norah," said the spoilt beauty, "she has been wondering what has kept you such a time. Father has not returned from his walk, and it is nearly time for James to meet the train." So saying, Joy turned away and went out of the kitchen.

Norah took off her apron, washed her hands and hurried away.

Sarah continued with her work, just glancing up when Norah entered and prepared a dainty tray with thin bread and butter and made tea for two in a delicate teapot.

Sarah waited until Norah returned, then made tea and set it on another tray, saying: "I have made some tea for you, Miss Norah." The girl looked at Sarah saying: "That was very nice of you to think of me. I really want it, too. Come and have some."

Sarah shook her head. "I will wait until you have finished yours," she said.

After Norah had hurriedly drunk a cup of tea, Sarah poured some and sat down to drink it. The entrance of James startled her. He was a tall young fellow, slow in his movements. His long face with melancholy expressions.

His hair was evidently his pride, for he wore it in a long curl draped well down over his low forehead. He paused as he caught sight of Sarah washing up the teacups.

"Good day," he mumbled in an abrupt manner.

Sarah nodded, and with a pleasant smile exchanged greetings.

After shuffling about, he continued: "You the new hand? I didn't see you come."

"I arrived this afternoon," answered Sarah.

James continued standing and looking at Sarah. He was evidently trying to read her. His silence irritated her. She glanced at him as she said: "Miss Joy has been trying to find you."

James frowned, as he replied in a grumbling voice: "Miss Joy's always wanting something."

Sarah stopped her work and came towards him. "Well, if she does, it's your place to do it."

James scowled as he looked at her, and said in a drawling voice: "I don't think you and me are going to get on too well. You're a bit of a boss you are, and that don't suit me."

Sarah's face flushed as she replied in an angry voice: "Well, if suiting you means that I am going to grumble at every little thing I am asked to do, we certainly won't get on. I am being paid, and well paid too for my work, and I mean to do the best I can. The best thing you can do to please me is to keep away from the kitchen."

James opened his eyes in astonishment. He had never been spoken to in that manner by any of the servants. In Katoomba on Saturday nights when he graced the picture show, many feminine eyes of the domestic class were turned with encouragement in his direction. His reputation as a steady worker, and of being



always in a job with a rumor of a comfortable banking account, had prevented many home truths being imparted, with the result he had come to believe that his presence was always acceptable, and his opinions sought. He closed his mouth in preparation of a scathing reply, when Norah appeared.

"James," she said: "I have received word that the visitors are coming by an earlier train. You will just have time to get ready to meet them."

"Very well, Miss Norah, I will get ready at once."

When he had gone Norah said: "I could not avoid hearing your answer to James. I admire you for it. There are not many workers with a sense of justice to their employers."

"I have been reared by a good English mother, who was in service, and she always taught me to be honest in my work," replied Sarah.

"She must have been a very fine character."

"She was," answered Sarah softly. "If she was alive now, I would not have left England."

"When the dinner was nearly cooked, Sarah said: "If you will leave things now to me, Miss Norah, I can manage." Norah disappeared while Sarah prepared the table.

Later, Joy entered the kitchen. She had evidently spent much time at her toilet. It was certainly repaid, as she looked very lovely.

"Take some hot water upstairs to my mother's room at once," she said to Sarah in an imperative voice. "She has been ringing the bell for some time, and you have not taken any notice."

Sarah did not immediately reply. She was returning the joint to the oven. Joy made an impatient movement with her shoulders.

"Do you hear me?" she demanded.

Sarah rose to her feet and faced her. "Yes," she answered quietly, "I did hear you, but as I



have only arrived this afternoon, I do not quite know the run of the house nor do I know which is your mother's room."

"Well, it's the room facing the top of the stairs," returned Joy, moving away.

Sarah filled an enamel can with hot water and mounted the stairs, knocking at the door as directed.

"Come in," a voice answered impatiently, and Sarah entered the room.

A handsome, middle aged woman reclined on a luxurious couch. By her side was a table with some dainty little cut glass jars, the contents of which she had evidently been using on her face and neck.

"So you have come at last," she said, in peevish tones. "I have been waiting for quite a while. Did you hear my bell?"

"I did hear a bell," replied Sarah, "but as I only arrived this afternoon——"

Mrs. Brandonn (the name was spelt with two n's, as she was so careful to instruct the shop attendants when leaving her address for parcels to be sent to her town house), moved impatiently on the couch.

"Please spare me explanations. My nerves will not stand them. Kindly attend to my bell when I ring."

Sarah's nose dilated. She was not accustomed to all this, given in that dictatorial manner. She was about to reply as she felt, when the door opened and Norah entered.

Mrs. Brandonn turned to her and said: "I do wish you would give me a little attention, Norah, instead of wasting your time as you do."

Norah's face flushed. Sarah heard her answer. "This afternoon I was very busy preparing for the visitors. Cook and the housemaids are gone, and Mrs. Harris kindly——"

Mrs. Brandonn interrupted: "Please do not give me details,—my nerves. . . . ."

Sarah did not wait to hear the rest of the sentence. She was glad to close the door behind her.

The appearance of James in black trousers and white coat, to say nothing of stiff shirt, with his hair well oiled and the front curl draped gracefully nearly to his eyebrows, made her smile. Evidently one of his duties was to wait on the family at table. He paused as he entered, then sauntered carelessly to a table and eyed Sarah slyly out of the corner of his eye. He frowned as she pretended not to have seen him, and continued with her face towards the oven.

"Ahem!" he coughed.

Sarah did not turn her head.

"Ahem!" coughed James again. He was feeling slightly annoyed. All the other servants were always impressed when James appeared in full regalia, for it suited him, and he knew it.

At last Sarah finished basting the meat and closed the oven door, then turned round, and said: "You seem to have a bad cough. You had better take something for it, or, better still, work it off. Hand me those two dishes and the pile of plates to put on the rack to heat, please."

James' face was a study. He could not speak. Sarah quietly repeated her request. James did not comply. The two faced each other.

"Look here," said James hotly. "I'm not here to wait on you, or anyone like you. Do you hear me?"

Sarah nodded. "Yes," she replied, "I am not exactly deaf, but I will be if you shout like that. You are not here to wait on me, I know, but the house is short handed, and I am a stranger and

do not know the run of the place yet." Sarah paused, then, smiling at James appealingly, added: "I would like you to help me tonight, if you please."

James could not resist Sarah's sweet smile. He nodded, and later when Norah entered to see that all was in readiness for the guests, she could not avoid smiling to herself as she saw James, quite bright and cheerful, helping Sarah with the dishing up of a dinner.

The meal was quite a success. James, during the different courses, reported how the guests enjoyed the food, especially the poultry, and regretted the appetite of one of the guests, who accepted a second helping, thus depriving him of his favorite portion of the bird.

When dinner was over, Norah came to the kitchen and said:

"Everyone enjoyed their dinner so much, Mrs. Harris; but for you I do not know what I should have done. Thank you for staying this evening."

Sarah smiled as she answered: "It is a pleasure to work for you, Miss Norah, but I do not think I will continue after this evening."

Norah opened her eyes in dismay.

"Oh! please don't say that, Mrs. Harris. I had hoped you would continue for some time. We have had such trouble to find suitable people and this afternoon you and I worked in such unison together that it made me quite happy. Will you please tell me why you will not continue?"

Sarah did not reply.

"It is because of James."

Sarah quickly shook her head as she replied: "Oh no! Miss Norah. James and I would work very well together."

Norah stood thinking. Then she said: "Is it because of my stepmother?"

Sarah again kept silent.

Norah said: "Please tell me."

"Yes," agreed Sarah. "You will excuse me if I tell you that I could not work with any pleasure for Mrs. Brandonn. I do not like her manner."

Norah smiled with relief. "Is that all? I am so glad. You see, my stepmother leaves the whole responsibility of the housekeeping in my hands. She seldom comes to the kitchen, so that you would rarely, if ever, come in contact with her. It is you and I that matter in the management of the household, and if we agree, why, that is all there is to worry over." Laying her hand on Sarah's arm, Norah said in an earnest manner: "Won't you consider it, please Mrs. Harris? It would help me such a great deal."

Sarah looked into Norah's face, and read the burden that the young shoulders had to carry. The little she had seen of Mrs. Brandonn was sufficient to show her that she was selfish and unreasonable. As for Joy, she knew her to be rude in manner. Of other characteristics of her nature she had a good idea. They were not to the girl's credit. Sarah's face was very sweet as she looked at Norah and said:

"I will stay at least a month, and if at the end of it we are both agreeable, I will continue for at least six months more. Perhaps," she continued smiling, "you may be glad to say 'No more, Mrs. Harris.'"

Norah laughed outright as she replied: "I do not think so; anyhow I am so glad you are staying on. Now both you and James have your dinner, and I will come to you later and give you the programme for tomorrow."

After their dinner, while Sarah was washing the dishes, and James carefully drying them, Norah came to the kitchen.



"James," she asked, "did you inquire at Ka-toomba registry office for a housemaid?"

"Yes, Miss Norah. I was to tell you that none of the girls would come so far. It's too lonely for them."

Norah sighed as she remarked: "It's always the same when we come here for the summer. They will not stay. I suppose I cannot blame them. Young girls want more amusement, after working most of the day."

James paused with the towel in his hand as he remarked: "It seems to me, Miss Norah, that the girls don't want to work at all. All they want to do is to go flying about, and make a fellow spend money on them." There was pain in his voice. Evidently the recollection was not to his liking.

After giving directions to Sarah for the morning, Norah left them to their duties.

As she lay in her bed that night, Sarah thought of the events of the day. She was glad she had decided to remain at "Glenview." She liked Norah very much, as she had told her, and was determined to lighten the burden of house-keeping. Then she thought of Bill, and wondered how he was faring. Did he miss her, or was he contented with single life without responsibilities. She hoped not. Perhaps on the morrow there would be a letter from Violet May with news of Bill waiting at the post office. With these thoughts and hopes, Sarah fell asleep.

Next day, as soon as her work was completed, James took her with him in the car as he was obliged to go to the village. At the post office a letter awaited her from Violet May. Eagerly she opened it and read:

"Deer Sarah

As I know ow fond you are of yer usband, I urry up ter rite to yer ter tell yer all the noos. Yisterdiy was me diy orf. I ad me best close on an was walkin down George street when all uv a suddent I looks up.



there was yer usbund as large as life driving a orse, at least e was angin on to ther rains an lookin as if e would fall over at every jerk of the cart. Ther was a eap uv vegterbales in the back uv the cart an another feller sittin on the bare edge uv the back. It made me eart go fair in me mouth ter see ow nearly 'e got chucked out when Bill was pulled up suddent by a bobby, who put a great big and in the orses face, enuf ter friten any orse. then e ses somethin ter Bill an e ansers reel civil to im. It was as much as I could do to stand still, let alone give a civil anser. I couldnt see fer the life uv me what e wanted ter pull im up for when e was only tryin ter urry is orse over the cross streets without nock-in anyone down. i ad a good look at yer usbund while the bobbie was chippin to im e as got a good bit thinner specially about the stummick, but e looks all the better fer it. Is close was old but clean an e as got a good big patch on the back of is trowsers which shows me ther is a wummun in the case. I opes not fer yore sake. i looks at the name an address on the cart but fer the life uv me I cant remember it at present. it as clean gorn out uv me ead. all i knows i am glad that i know where e is an what e is workin at, without arskin that there person i met at the pitcher show. I ave another bit uv news, mrs Ellis is givin up er ome an goin ter England ter get some monney as was left er. She wants me ter go to the dorters place but thats no good ter me. i wants ter see ther wurld an oo knows i may meet a fairy prince in me travels. Mrs. Straat sends er luv an so do i, an eaps uv it too.

Yurs,  
Violet May."

Sarah's face was shining with happiness as she entered the car and asked James to drive her to the boarding house to collect her clothes. She gathered them up and carelessly stuffed them into her suitcase, so differently from her usual tidy habits. The drive to "Glenview" was made in silence on her part, her brain busy with thoughts of Bill. So he was working. He must be, otherwise he would not be driving a horse. She smiled as she imagined Bill standing up in a cart guiding a horse amongst the city traffic. She wondered where he had learnt to drive. He had not told her he had had any experience of horses, or knew anything of them. Perhaps

the management of them came natural to men and boys. Then came the thought of his appearance. He was thinner. Well, that would be all the better, as he had grown too big while she was caring for him. Was he fretting for her? The thought was very sweet and lingered with her for some time. It was nice to be missed, but Sarah was too truthful even with herself to imagine that that was the case. His every action for the past year at least denied the thought. No! necessity was the cause of his improvement. He was obliged to work to live, and that very fact became a blessing. She longed to see him, even though she did not speak with him.

Arriving at "Glenview" with plenty of work to do until bedtime, drove all thoughts of Bill from her mind, but that night when she entered her bedroom she re-read Violet's letter. She lingered over the sentence of the patched trousers. For a moment jealousy entered her mind. Perhaps he was living with someone else who cared for him. Maybe it was the woman he had sat with in the picture theatre. The thought hurt her. Surely he could not forget their marriage vows so soon. It was only a little over three weeks since they parted. No! there must be some other explanation. She would not think those thoughts. She finished reading the letter. So Mrs. Ellis was going to England to collect a legacy. Sarah felt pleased. Mrs. Ellis was the right type of woman to have money left to her, for she would make good use of it. Sarah knew of many poor people who had benefited by the kindness of her former employer. Then Violet May would be seeking another situation. The thought passed swiftly through her brain of she and Violet working together. How happy that would be! She sincerely liked Violet. Miss Norah would be so pleased, too.

During the following morning, when Norah and Sarah were working side by side, Sarah mentioned that she had a friend whose mistress was leaving for England, and as housemaids were difficult to obtain she would write to Violet Jones, if suitable to Miss Norah, and find out if she would care to come to Katoomba.

Norah listened eagerly: "Do write to your friend today," she said, after she had asked many questions. "By your description, she should be an excellent addition to the house and relieve each of us of some of the work."

Sarah promised to do so, and that day wrote a long letter to Violet May. A passing postman carried it with him, and must have posted it immediately for the next day Sarah received a telegram in reply:

"Leaving Monday, saw Bill. Sending letter, love, Violet."

Sarah could hardly wait until the following day for news of Bill. When the morning post went by she felt quite sick with disappointment. No letter for her. It was only when she had counted the hours that she realised that it was impossible to receive a letter by the morning delivery. Late in the afternoon the letter arrived. She hurried into her bedroom and opened it. She read:

"My dear Sarah

When i opened yer letter an read it i nearly ad a fit. fer the life uv me i couldnt beleeve it was true. Jest fancy you an me workin tergether agen. Shows me moren ever theres some big and a giding us with a wise ead at the back uv it I ave me ticket aready this time, an theres ter be no nonsense on the platform with them kerlecters else ill make it ot fer them. Ill keep all the news uv Bill till i sees yer agin. Mrs. Ellis is that pleased that you an me are goin ter work side by side. i am gettin er ter rite ter miss Norah tellin er me karecter. Its the best thing ter do. Me ritins not uv the best. im that excited that i burst me stays in two places.

Luv an kisses,

Violet May.

Evidently Norah had received a letter from Mrs. Ellis by the same mail, for she came to Sarah with it in her hand. Her face showed pleasure as she said:

"This is a letter from Mrs. Ellis about your friend, Violet Jones. She gives her an excellent character for honesty and industry. I am so glad she is coming."

"So am I," answered Sarah. "Monday seems a long way off. Four whole days."

## Chapter XI.

The days that followed their losses at the races were full of anxious thought for Tom and Bill. They could not realise that they were nearly at the end of their money. Things were not going nearly as smoothly as Bill had planned. Over and over again he reviewed his first day at the races and wondered how he could have been so foolish as to trust the captain's word in anything. The fraud was so palpable, after the event. It had opened his eyes as perhaps nothing else could have done to the uncertainties of winning a fortune at horse racing. There seemed nothing else to do but work. His very soul hated the thought of it. No he would wait a bit and see what would turn up. Surely the fates would be kinder to him than that. Luckily, he had paid for his room a week in advance. The week was nearly ended and his money had dwindled down to the last two pounds. The worst of it was, his appetite was so good, too good for the money he had in hand, and then it cost so much to satisfy it. Tom still had a few pounds left from the sale of the business. Each day they would sit in the park and talk of many things. They began to have more respect for the capitalist who employed labor, for they realised to accumulate money required something more than luck. It necessitated industry and perseverance. Those few days when money was dwindling to nothing, and work or starvation faced them, were the best discipline for the two men. Neither was really bad; all they needed was to taste life as it really was, with its individual responsibilities brought home to them—then the good in both their characters would be revealed. Each had



been guarded too well by over indulgent women, who had loved them not wisely, but too well.

Bill was the first to make a move to seek work. It was not until he had changed the last pound note, that he made the first attempt to seek a position. He rose early one morning without disturbing Tom, who now shared his room so as to save expense, and went to seek his old job at the works. On the way, he determined not to work too hard: he did not feel inclined to tire himself. When he sauntered up to the gate, he found the same gatekeeper.

"How is it," he asked.

"Not too bad," replied the man. "Things 'ave changed a bit since you was 'ere. Got a new boss over the rivetters an' 'e keeps 'em at it."

Bill shuddered. That had been his job. If the men were overlooked, they would be obliged to put in a good day's work.

"Any chance of a job, do yer think?"

"I dunno, but yer kin try."

Bill gave a hitch to his trousers and walked a trifle quicker to the workshop. A keen faced, brisk little man stopped him with: "Do you want anything?"

Bill said: "Yes, I'm after me old job if I can get it."

"What's that?" said the foreman.

"Rivetting."

"What's your limit?"

Bill told him. The foreman looked him up and down. "How long is it since you was working?" he asked.

"Oh! some time now," replied Bill restlessly.

"Looks like it from your hands. Your sort's no good here. We got to get the orders out to time and you don't look to me as if you could bustle."

Bill scowled: "Seems to me if you do a good

day's work that ought to be enough without a lot o' bustling," he said.

"Depends on what your sort calls a good day's work," returned the foreman.

Bill's face darkened. "Look here," he said, thrusting his face close to the other man, "I don't want any of your cheek. When I want to know what a good day's work is I won't come to you to find out."

The little man faced him bravely as he said: "No, but you'd better find out how to do it."

Bill made a movement as if to punch the man in the jaw. The steady eye of the foreman made him think better of it. He relaxed his fighting attitude and turned away as the man said:

"Come to me again when you get in trim a bit."

"No thanks," returned Bill. "I'm off it."

The gatekeeper said: "Any luck?"

"The best," returned Bill, "I'm orf."

The gatekeeper opened wide his eyes. "Not 'avin' any?"

"Not for me," answered Bill bitterly. "All he seems to want to do is to get as much out of a feller as he can. They're all alike, women an' men."

The man laughed. "You want to buck up the same as I do."

"You!" ejaculated Bill. "I like that. You've got a soft billet orlright. Wish I had harf your complaint."

The gatekeeper laughed outright as he said: "It takes brains to run this job. To know when an' 'ow to loaf."

"It does that," answered Bill as he passed out.

The return to his lodgings was made in deep thought. Tom had disappeared, and did not turn up until late that evening. It was the most miserable day of Bill's life. Even when

he was very ill, he had been surrounded by love and comfort. As he sat on the seat in the park he wondered what had become of Sarah. As he thought of her many good qualities and her loving ways, he longed to see her. He put a hand in his pocket and drew out a two shilling piece. He looked at it for a few seconds. Would he insert an advertisement in the "Herald" and say he was ill and needed her? He felt sorely tempted. Then he thought of the shabby way in which he had treated her, and her wonderful firmness of character in carrying out her resolution to break the ties that bound them. For the first time he began to realise his faults, and to slightly guess what she had gone through to keep the home together while he was sick. With a fierce movement he thrust the money in his pocket. No! he would first try to make good and get a little bit of money together, then advertise in the paper that he had got work and ask her to correspond with him and tell him where she was. At the thought he straightened his shoulders and sat up on the seat.

"Ah!" he breathed, "I'll soon get things going and get her back again. He pulled out her letter and read it through. Yes, she was quite right to leave him. He had been a lazy skunk to let her shoulder the burden as long as she had done. He lingered over the last sentence. "Until twelve months' time, I will be faithful to you, for, in spite of your lazy ways, I love you."

God bless her! She had been a good wife to him and she would keep her word. He, too, would be faithful, he was resolved on that point. He walked to his lodgings with a brisker step. Tom was lying down fast asleep. Somehow the sight irritated him. He bent over him to see if he was drunk. No, he thought not, he only looked tired. Then he caught sight of his hands—they were very dirty. Tom

had evidently been working. The thought was pleasing. If Tom could find work to do, well so could he. He laid down on his bed and waited for his friend to waken, his mind busy with the past. Soon Tom stirred and sat up.

"Hullo!" he said, "What became of you this morning? When I woke up you had done a flit. Where did you get to?"

"I went after me old job, but didn't take it on. A new foreman on the beat, and his manner didn't suit me, but I think I'll go back tomorrow and see if he'll put me on. It's good money or-right."

"Not on yer life," returned Tom, sitting up in his excitement. "I am on to a good wicket, an' we can work it together. 'Ere, look what I made," and so saying Tom dived his hand into his pocket and pulled out a large handful of silver and coppers. "An' that's not all to it."

Putting a hand into an inside pocket, he drew out a notebook, opened it, pulled out a one pound note and a ten shilling note. "Nothing the matter with that as far as I can see," he cried triumphantly.

"Whe-e-w" whistled Bill in delightful amazement. "I should think not. How did you do it? Robbed the bank?"

Tom laughed as he said: "Not on your life. That's a silly game for the likes o' me. I'd 'ave one go, and that 'ud be me last. I'd be sure to be pinched the very first time I'd get up to any monkey tricks. No. This," waving the notes in the air, "'as been come by 'onest. I thought it all out last night when I couldn't sleep, an' this morning I got up early, went down to the markets, gave a man a couple of bob for the loan of his old vegetable basket, then made a bid for a lot that went up and got them fairly cheap. I could see there were too many fer the basket, so I looked round ter see what I



could 'ire. I knew I didn't 'ave enough ter 'ire a cart an' 'orse, an' besides it takes two ter manage that, one ter stand by the 'orse's head so as 'e won't run away."

Tom laughed at the recollection of some of the horses he had seen attached to the hawkers' carts.

"Go on," said Bill impatiently. "You couldn't have earnt all that money," pointing to the notes which Tom still had in his hand, "with a basket."

"No," said Tom, thoroughly enjoying himself. "I looked round and caught sight of a kid with an old truck. You know, an old box on four wheels, with a rope in the front." Bill nodded. "I went up to 'im an' said: 'What about lettin' me 'ave that?' I ses. 'E was as sharp as ninepence. 'Not much,' 'e ses. I laughs at the kid who was just about to do a get-away. 'E thought I wanted ter get it fer nix. Not me! 'I'll give five bob fer it,' I ses. The kid gets inside the rope an' ses: 'Show us the money.' I pulled it out, nearly me larst be this. 'E put out a dirty little 'and an' ses: 'Give it.' I wasn't takin' any risks. I took a grip on the rope, 'e did the same, an' I 'anded 'im the money. 'E got the surprise of 'is life. The thing wasn't worth four bob wheels and all, but I wanted it at the time. The kid did the quickest getaway in 'is life, fer when I come ter 'put me stuff in it, one of the wheels came orf an' I thought that was the stone end of me. I got a bit of wire from a feller an' fixed it up, but I 'ad ter nurse it up a bit an' push the bloomin' thing on the one wheel 'arf me time. Any'ow I stowed the stuff away an' made for the back streets around the city. I knocked at a few doors, an' before I knew where I was, I 'ad all me money back that the whole caboose cost me. Then I knew I was



on a good wicket, an' 'ad only ter sell the rest to make a bit over. I went fer all I was worth, an' didn't even stop to 'ave a drink. I knew if I 'ad one that 'ud be the finish fer the day, so I just went fer all I was worth."

Here Tom gave a big sigh at the recollection, as he continued: "My word! I was tired when I 'ad sold 'em nearly all. By that time the truck was done, wouldn't move another yard, so I gives it ter a kid who thought 'e was made fer life, an' filled the basket with the rest. I carted 'em to Mrs. Treviss. She's not a bad sort when yer know 'er. She gave me a bonzer tea."

Bill listened with all his ears: "It seems to be just in my line," he said. "You can leave off when you like and have a spell. What do you say me joinin' you?"

"Not a bad idea," returned Tom, "I 'ave been thinkin' o' that all day. But it's not a bit o' good unless we do the thing properly. The best thing we can do is to 'ire a 'orse an' cart fer the day, one of us drive it, an' stay with the 'orse, while the other works the basket."

Bill looked gloomy. "That puts an end ter me," he said. "I've got no money to go whacks, so I'll have to get out on me own."

Tom laughed as he clutched Bill's shoulder. "Not on yer life," he said. "You're one of the best pals a feller ever 'ad. Yer could 'ave rooked me fer the lot, an' I'd never 'ave found it out. No. You stand in with me an' we'll work it for all we're worth. I want ter get back a bit, so that I can find me wife an' p'raps take a shop on later. I don't want ter use the money she's got fer I reckon it's 'ers, to do as she likes with. She's been one o' the best ter me an' it's only when a feller's on 'is own does 'e miss a good wife. Mind yer," he concluded, "they're not all the same. Some fellers are

damn glad ter get quit o' them, an' are better off, but not me. I'm goin' ter get 'er back."

"Same 'ere," said Bill determinedly. "I had a good un and didn't know it. Now it's me for the double life agin, but I'm goin' to get a bit together first. It's good of you to offer, and I'm glad to accept, but only on these conditions, that the first day you take the lot till the exs. are done, then I stand in at the end."

Tom looked at Bill's face, then said: "Orl-right, if yer want it that way. Any'ow I'll do the buyin' till yer get used to it. They're a lot o' sharks down that way, an' want watchin'.

Bill agreed, and both men discussed their possible purchases. Tom decided to look around and hire the horse and cart on the morrow so as to be ready for the following day. He pulled out his money and carefully counted it.

"There doesn't seem much there to do what we want," he said. "It's no use goin' out with only 'arf a cart load. Any'ow, I'll do the best I can, an' if you're anythin' like with the basket yer can get good prices fer yer stuff."

Bill looked alarmed. "Good Lor!" he cried in an alarmed voice. "I'm not going to do the basket act, surely. I thought you wanted me to mind the horse, and you do the rest."

Tom laughed heartily at the look of terror on Bill's face. "Not on yer life," he said quickly. "It's turn an' turn about fer me. Yer'll soon get used ter it, an' get ter like it."

"Like it!" said Bill in a horrified voice. "Never! To have the door suddenly opened and never know what sort of a woman that's going to face you is enough to upset a feller for the day. You do know what your wife looks like, and you get used to it, but to have to look at a lot o' different women, let alone speak to 'em, 'ud finish me right out. "No," he ended, with

a determined shake of his head, "I couldn't face it."

Tom rolled on the bed, convulsed with laughter. Bill looked so terrified. Then he sat up and said: "Oh alright. If yer want it that way, 'ave it fer a day or two, then we can see 'ow we get along. We ought ter make a good thing out o' it, if we 'ave any luck. What do you know about 'orses?" he asked.

"Not much," said Bill. "In the old country I never had the chance to ride one, let alone get behind one, but I daresay I can manage to drive. It seems to me all you've got to do is to let the horse have his head and he'll do the rest."

"Oh! there's a bit more in it than that. Any'ow, you watch me, an' I'll learn yer 'ow ter drive."

"Right oh!" answered Bill cheerfully.

They discussed their plans far into the night and the next day Tom went on his way to hire the horse and cart. Bill went to his favorite seat in the park, facing the road. As he sat there, he longed to make a bit of money so that he could go shares in the morrow's enterprise. The day's meals would about see the end of his finances. Idly he glanced up the street, and watched a cart heavily loaded with furniture come along. The driver sat perched up on a most uncomfortable seat. Bill wondered how he managed to drive at such an angle. He pondered if he would ever be equal to drive one horse, let alone two. Just as the cart came level to him, it gave a lurch and one of the wheels came off. The cart dropped with a crash to the ground. The horses taking fright began to move quickly, anxious to get rid of such a fearful thing behind them. Some furniture, evidently not securely tied, flew off on to the road. The driver was pitched clean off the cart,

and was picking himself up, when two men brought the horses to a standstill before they had gone many yards. It all happened so quickly that Bill had no time to move. But he lost no time in making one of the crowd of on-lookers, and then pressed forward with a couple of other men to give a hand in putting on the wheel. Luckily the driver had escaped injury and was equal to the situation. Bill helped to pick up the few things that had fallen.

The driver said to him: "Thanks old man. Doing anything for a bit?"

"No," answered Bill.

"How about coming along and giving me a hand with these?" pointing to his load. "I am only taking them down Pitt Street to a set of offices. Me mate slipped me up at the finish, but I trusted to luck to pick up someone near the building. Worth a few bob."

Bill brightened up considerably. It was just what he wanted, to earn a few shillings before to-morrow.

"Right oh!" he said gladly. The two men sprang on to the cart.

It was not long before they reached their destination, and the unloading began. The lifting and carrying of the heavy office furniture tried Bill's temper. He had not learnt the art of shifting heavy articles with a minimum of strength. He put forth all his effort, which was considerable when he wanted to use it, and annoyed his employer more than once by jamming him in tight corners and not obeying directions. When Bill had finished carrying up two flights of stairs a considerable number of heavy books which necessitated many journeys, his enthusiasm for work had quite disappeared. He felt dog tired, and accepted the five shillings as his due.

The owner, who appeared on the scene when



the work was ended, also added two shillings. When Bill was pulling on his coat, the driver of the cart said:

"How about taking it on?" nodding at the empty cart. "It's not a bad paying job."

Bill shuddered. "Not on your life. I've had one try, an' that's enough to satisfy me that moving furniture ain't the job it's cracked up to be. I reckon a feller earns every bean he gets at that," waving an arm at the cart. "I'll say good day, and thanks for the job, but I hope it'll be me larst at that kind o' thing."

Bill walked with tired footsteps up Pitt Street. He stopped to look at some illustrations outside a moving picture show, when a woman tapped him on the arm. He looked round and frowned. He was in no mood to be accosted by a woman, and a strange woman at that.

"Excuse me," she said, "but ain't you a friend of Tom Hawkins? I'm his sister-in-law. My sister's ill in bed fretting the life out of herself to find out how to make it up with her husband without him knowing so to speak."

Bill nodded. "Come along in 'ere, an' we'll 'ave a talk," he said. The woman agreed, and they entered and sat down.

After talking for some time, Bill wrote out Tom's address and gave it to her. Feeling tired, he rose and went to his lodgings, flung himself down and immediately fell fast asleep. The entry of Tom roused him. He sat up, and listened to a vivid description of clever bargaining for the loan of a horse and cart from a man who had been accustomed to loaning them out by the day.. Tom was jubilant.

"It takes me to settle them when they come the big prices. We want ter make a bit to-morrow an' it's no use spendin' too much on a flash moke."

Bill nodded in approval as he said: "I'm with



you there, only I hope the brute'll be strong enough to pull the load."

"I'll see ter that," said Tom cheerfully. "'Ow did yer get on?"

Bill gave an account of his doings. Tom was convulsed with laughter.

This aroused Bill's ire. "What the hell are you laughing at? I don't see much to larf at in a feller who nearly pulled the inside out o' him carting other people's furniture about. My opinion is, that those that wants to shift, let 'em, but let 'em do it themselves. They wouldn't want to do it more than once."

Tom made a brave effort to cease from laughing as he wiped the tears from his eyes.

"Ah!" he gasped. "I never laughed so much in all me life. Any'ow, it's seven bob in yer pocket, an' that's not too bad." He sobered up when Bill told him of the meeting with his sister-in-law. He grew quite excited, and would not wait to hear the end of the story.

"Never mind all that. Where's 'er address? I'm off."

When he heard that Bill had not thought of asking for it, he swore himself faint.

"Do yer mean ter say," he demanded, "that yer gave 'er me address an' never asked fer 'ers? Well, you've got a lot o' sense, I don't think!"

Bill thought it wisest not to mention that his wire was sick with longing to see him. If the bare fact of hearing that his address was asked for had such a disturbing effect, what would he say or do, if he knew she wanted to see him and evidently to be reunited. During the silence that followed while Tom was recovering, Bill felt sorry that he had not had more sense. He suggested advertising in the "Herald." Tom looked up from the pillow where he had flung himself.

“’Ave a bit o’ common, do. As if a woman would think o’ lookin’ in the “Herald” for anythin’ like that. Yes,” he continued bitterly, “if there was a few sales on, then they might.”

Bill thought of Sarah and her wise suggestion. He longed to go out and spend a couple of shillings in a loving message, but he refrained. No, he would wait.

The two men spent an evening in quiet thought. Both rose very early, Tom to collect the horse and cart, Bill to wait outside the markets until he arrived.

## Chapter XII.

As he looked at the fierce bustle and the excitement of a busy market day, he felt his blood stir, and he was glad that he was in it. A shout of "Hullo there!" made him look round. Amidst the crowd of horses, carts and men, he could not at first distinguish Tom. Another hail, and his eyes rested on Tom standing up in a vehicle which in some far distant age resembled a cart. It had once shared in an equal distribution of paint. Now it had shed it in patches as if ashamed to own such a thing. Bill's eyes travelled quickly to the animal that supported the shafts. It was a sorry looking brute. In its dim and distant youth it could never have been a handsome one, nor even good looking. It looked as if its parents had been a queer mixture of size and strength, regardless of appearance. The long legs and back, together with huge bones that seemed to have developed into knobs which stuck out in odd places, did not give that graceful appearance so dear to the lovers of horses. His huge ears seemed to be worked separately on swivels. Sometimes they acted at the same time, and one waited to hear them click as they came together, as if they worked in a socket.

Bill came forward in a dream, unable to take his eyes off the horse. His look of dismay removed Tom's feeling of impatience at his delay.

"What's the matter with yer, old bird? Didn't ver 'ear me call?"

"No," replied Bill, still dazed.

Tom laughed. "Don't cher like it?" pointing to the horse that stood at ease.

"Well, I can't say as 'ow I do. It seems ter

me if it lasts the day out we'll be lucky. That's all I can say.'

"Oh! that's orlright," replied Tom, with an airy wave of the hand. "There's more in 'im than you'd think."

"Ther'd want ter be," replied Bill, "'Ere lend me a couple of bob."

"What for?" demanded Tom.

"Never you mind," answered Bill, "That comes off me day's pay."

"Right oh! You mind the moke an' I'll do the buying," said Tom, jumping off the cart and disappearing into the markets.

Bill looked round. "'Ere," he said, to a dirty little urchin, "mind this fer me," pointing to the horse which had now fallen asleep with its head between its knees.

The boy laughed as he said. "That don't want any mindin' mister. 'E won't run away."

"Never you mind that. You stay by 'is head. Yer never can tell what an 'orse'll do when yer back's turned."

"Yer give me a sprat if I do?" demanded the youngster.

"I will when me mate comes back," said Bill, about to leave.

The boy jeered, "Yer do take me fer a melon. I want the cash first."

Bill dived his hand into his pocket and searched in vain. He had given every penny to Tom that morning, and all he had was the two shillings in his hand.

"Go on, yer dirty little rascal," he said, waving the boy away. "Do yer think I want ter scale yer fer a measly sprat?"

"Well, why don't cher give it?" called the boy at a safe distance. Then he got farther away and called out in a jeering voice. "'Aven't got it! 'Aven' got it!"

Bill made a movement as though to chase him when the horse woke up with a start and sneezed. Bill jumped up in the air about a foot, and made a dive for the horse's head. The horse eyed him in surprise.

"Whoa ther!" whispered Bill, afraid for his life that the horse was going to move.

The horse, unused to feel a restraining hand near his mouth, suddenly lifted his head, jerking the rein out of Bill's hand. He looked dangerously like moving. Bill made a spring at therein. The horse lifted his head higher, then suddenly brought it down, giving Bill a nasty blow on the cheek, with his bony jaw. It made his teeth rattle. Then Bill swore. The horse recognised the accustomed sound. He looked alarmed. Bill raised his fist to give him a blow, he felt so angry. The poor brute, he thought, didn't know any better. It was evidently accustomed to harsh treatment. So he pated him on the bony nose. The horse looked astonished. After murmuring a few soothing words in his ear, Bill tied the cart wheel and went away for a few minutes, returning with a cardboard box with some horse feed in it. The horse gave a delighted neigh as he dipped his nose into the chaff.

Tom returned with a hot, excited face. "Got a bonza lot this time. If we sell out to-day, we'll 'ave a few quid in our pockets."

"That's good," said Bill cheerfully. "We'll do it."

The two men loaded up the cart. Neither noticed that the horse had ceased feeding until all the goods were packed. Then Tom went round to the horse's head to remove the box.

"'Ere," he said, "this won't do. The 'orse'll never pull this," pointing to the cart, of which the shafts were lifted so high that the horse ap-



peared to be standing on tip toe. "This won't do."

"'Ow's that?" said Bill crossly. He was feeling a bit tired with lifting heavy weights.

"Come an' 'ave a look," said Tom waving his hand. Bill went to the horse's head. He laughed at the quaint expression of the horse.

"Come on," he said cheerfully, "we'll soon fix that."

The two men quickly adjusted the load. The horse went on eating. He gave a huge sigh of disappointment when he had finished. Then Bill mounted the cart and seated himself on the seat; Tom followed with the reins in his hand.

"Git ep!" he called. The horse made no movement. "Git ep!" called Tom in a more authoritative voice. The horse waved his two ears independently, but made no attempt to move. "Git ep!" again called Tom angrily. The horse made a feeble movement, then stopped. Tom swore. The horse gave a bound, pulling the cart sideways. The wheel had been tied. A few men standing near gave a roar of laughter. "'Ave a 'eart!" called one. The wheel's tied," sang out another. Tom looked round.

"You're a nice one," he said in a disgusted manner, "yer might 'ave told me."

Bill looked sheepish. "Didn't give it a thought," he muttered.

Tom remounted. "Get ep!" he called, flapping the reins. The horse remembered the sound and moved forward. After going some distance, Tom said: "This looks orlright, 'ow about it?"

Bill agreed. The two men filled the basket and Tom pulled it on his arm, saying: "You watch me, an' see 'ow easy it is, then yer can take yer turn." Bill grunted. Tom went forward and knocked at a door. He waited, then he knocked again. The door suddenly opened

and a thin, waspish looking woman faced him.

"What do you want?" she asked quickly. Tom pointed to his basket.

"I don't want any to-day," she said, and slammed the door in his face.

"Whe-ew," whistled Tom, as he looked across at Bill, who was standing with a white face holding on with one hand to the back of the cart.

"A nice cup o' tea there," he said as he joined him. Then he looked at Bill and laughed as he said: "Yer don't want ter look so frightened. They won't bite. Any'ow yer don't come across many like them, thank Gawd!"

"Yer don't want ter," said Bill, wiping his face with a dirty rag. "I'd be stung stiff if I did, an' be no good fer the rest o' the day."

"Go on!" laughed Tom. "Don't let 'em scare yer. Now I'm off to the next. Let's 'ope I'll 'ave better luck."

The next house proved to shelter a comfortable looking woman with a jovial face, but with a keen eye to business. The bargaining was warm, but she spent over ten shillings. Tom returned to the cart. "Not a bad sort," he said as they filled the basket. Then he proceeded further along the street, meeting with varied success.

As soon as twelve o'clock came round, Bill said: "'Ow about a bit ter eat? I could do with some."

"Good business," agreed Tom, looking round for an eating house. "There don't seem ter be any about 'ere," he said. "I'm off in 'ere," pointing to an hotel.

"'Ere, cut it out, Tom. Yer know it's no good ter you. An' we've got ter finish this little lot," pointing to the cart which was half full of vegetables and fruit. "Let's buy a bit at this 'am and beef shop an' sit an' eat it in the cart."

Tom turned sulky. He was thirsty and wanted a drink.

"I'll wait 'ere while yer go an' buy somethin' an' then when yer come back I'll 'ave a taste."

Bill soon returned with a large parcel, and Tom went off to the hotel. After waiting for some time, Bill tied up the wheel and went in to the bar. There was Tom, with four companions, each with a large empty glass in front of them. As Bill entered he heard Tom say: "Fill 'em up agen, boys."

"Come on out o' this, Tom," said Bill. "You've had enough."

"I'll 'ave another, an' then," Tom paused, and laughed in a silly fashion, lifting his glass and speedily emptying it, and passing it to the barmaid to be refilled.

Bill seized him by the arm saying: "No more. You've 'ad enough. We've got a lot ter get through this afternoon."

Tom sobered up as he remembered the horse and cart outside.

"Quite right," he said, "but I must 'ave another."

Bill could see that he was speedily becoming obstinate and determined to continue drinking.

Besides, he remembered that he had no money and the amount that Tom had earnt was rapidly diminishing. Bill felt desperate.

He whispered: "'Ave a 'eart, Tom. Don't yer fergit the wife."

Tom straightened up. "Whe-ew!" he breathed. "It's time I woke up. Why didn't yer remind me of 'er before?" He strode to the door. One of the four men barred the way: "Who's payin' fer that?" pointing to the newly filled glass.

"Yerself, o' course!" answered Tom angrily. "I've shouted you fellers quite enough, like the fool I am, now yer pay for yerselves."

The fellow showed fight. Bill came at the back and took him by the collar and the seat of the pants and ran him outside. Tom followed.

"Now," he said. "Do yer want any more," The fellow shook his head, and as soon as he was released re-entered the bar.

Tom and Bill then seated themselves on the kerbing at the side of the cart and began to eat their dinner. The horse looked round and made queer noises with his mouth. It had the desired effect.

"What about 'is dinner?" asked Bill. "Did yer get any feed for 'im this mornin'?"

"No," replied Tom, "the man that 'ires 'im by the day 'as ter feed 'im."

"Well there's no wonder 'e looks like 'e does. Lend me a couple o' bob. I can't sit an' eat with 'im lookin' so 'ungry," said Bill, rising.

Tom drew out some money and handed it to Bill, who soon returned with some chaff and a handful of corn in an old sack. The horse gave a frantic neigh of delight, and quickly dug his nose in it. Bill patted him on the bony nose.

"Poor old boy," he said soothingly. The horse blinked at Bill in approval. It surely was a party day for him.

Tom mounted the cart, and clearing a small portion of it, sank down saying: "I'm goin' ter 'ave a sleep; you do what yer like."

Bill shook him. "'Ere, don't go ter sleep," he said. "We've got ter get rid of all these."

"Don't care a damn," replied Tom sleepily. "Yer do as yer like. I'm goin' ter sleep, an' that's all there is t'it." So saying Tom settled himself and soon feel fast asleep.

Bill felt desperate. He did not know what to do. He could not drive. He was terrified at the bare idea of trying to sell. He sat down and waited. Tom snored loudly. Bill rose and



put away the empty feed bag. He waited an hour it seemed to him, then he shook Tom roughly, saying:

“Wake up, Tom! You’ve ’ad enough.”

Tom with difficulty opened his eyes. “What the ’ell’s the matter with yer? Let me sleep I tell yer,” he said crossly, then settled himself down and was soon snoring again.

Bill was in despair. It was almost three o’clock and there was nearly half the stuff to be sold. He dismounted and led the horse and cart into a side street. He stopped near the kerb and tied the wheel; then he looked at Tom. The motion of the cart appeared to have wooed him into a sweeter slumber, for his mouth was wide open and he was snoring loudly. Bill picked up the basket and looked at it, then put it down again. He felt he could not face the thought of selling to women who might snap him up. The sight of Tom peacefully sleeping roused him. He wished he could sleep also. After all, why not? Their time was their own. Then came the thought of Sarah. No, his time was not his own. He wanted her again, and this was his opportunity of getting her. The profits were good and all it needed was to carry a basket and knock at a door, and the rest was easy. At least it looked easy, especially if the woman knew what she wanted and was in a hurry to get inside again. He squared his shoulders, picked up the basket, strode to the nearest door and lifted his hand to the knocker. His hand dropped to his side. As he was trying to pluck up courage the door opened, and a pleasant voice said:

“It it vegetables you have there? I am so glad, for I was just going out to the corner to buy some.”

Bill gasped with relief, and without saying a



word thrust the basket in front of her. She picked up a sample of the bananas and:

"How much?" she asked.

Bill wet his lips. The words would not come.

"Are you deaf?" she demanded.

Bill shook his head.

"Well, how much?" she asked again.

Bill found his voice and told her. She appeared satisfied, and ordered one dozen. Bill felt cheered. The balance of her orders was taken by Bill with sundry nods of his head. When he got to the cart he felt dazed. So much had happened to him in such a little while. He remembered her order, and counted to himself the amount. It appeared to him to be very decent indeed. When he presented her with the full basket she disappeared into the house, and when she returned with the money Bill felt quite happy and returned a very cordial "thank you," to her.

He felt inclined to skip as he returned to the cart. The first terror was over. Money was in his hand. He felt jubilant. He looked at Tom who was still snoring. He smiled. He advanced to the next door and gave the knocker a decided knock. A big, stout woman opened the door. After fierce bargaining on her side, and a sturdy defending of the prices on his, Bill delivered the goods, and sighed with relief when he gazed at the money in his hand.

"Whe-ew!" he gasped. "That was a tough'un. I only 'ope I don't strike too many o' them this afternoon. If I do I'll chuck a seven."

After attending to the many demands of the varied customers for an hour, Bill felt exhausted. "No wonder," he thought, "that fellers take a drop. I don't blame 'em. The wimmen are enough ter make a feller take to it." He sighed with weariness. Just then Tom woke up. He sat up and looked sheepishly at Bill.

"'Ow is it?" he asked, not expecting Bill's reply of: "Not too bad. I've taken a fair bit this afternoon."

"What!" ejaculated Tom, his mouth opening with astonishment. "Yer don't mean ter tell me you've got a move on an' sold all that!" pointing to the back of the cart, where now only a few things remained.

Bill nodded.

Tom gave a howl of laughter, threw himself down on the floor of the cart, and laughed until tears stood in his eyes.

"'Ow did yer manage it?" he asked as soon as he recovered.

"'Ow did I?" answered Bill bitterly. "The best way I could, an' no thanks ter yer."

Tom's face stiffened. He remembered his conduct, and how he had left Bill to face the situation on his own. He got down in silence and helped to arrange the few things that remained into the basket.

"It's up ter me now ter get a move on," he said. "Give me the basket."

Bill handed it to him without a word, and climbing into the cart sank down sighing with relief. The strain was over. He could rest. He reviewed his afternoon's work, then pulled out his earnings and counted them with satisfaction. He had done well.

It was dark when Tom had bargained the last basketful away. It had been a long, strenuous day's work. The return of the horse to his owners was quickly done, and when both men had eaten a large meal they returned to their room and counted the day's takings, then the expenses. Tom recollected what he had spent in the hotel, and Bill his borrowings. When they divided the profits they were delighted with the returns of their work and expenditure.

Bill said, as he counted some money and laid it on one side: "That's fer to start a bankin' account. I'm fed up with not 'avin' a bean ter me name. I 'ope that every day I can add ter it, until I get me wife with me."

"Same 'ere," agreed Tom. "All I 'ope is that I won't blue the lot in a bar."

"I 'ope not," returned Bill fervently. "Yer take me tip an' bank some every day, then yer won't get much 'urt. Yer a beggar once yer start."

Tom agreed. "I'm no good without the wife," he said. "We worked tergether real well an' saved enough ter start that resturant. I wish ter goodness I could find 'er. My idea is ter take a shop, me ter go to the markets an' do the buyin' an' she ter stay in the shop while I'm on me run. Then, when we've worked up a decent biusiness, sell out an' the two of us take a trip to the old country. I wouldn't take on another cookshop for all the tea in China. There's too much trouble cooking the food fer my likin'."

Bill agreed absently, his thoughts busy with Tom's idea of a shop. Wouldn't it be fine if he saved enough for to open in a small way, advertised for Sarah to meet him, and then discussed the matter with her? He grew excited at the thought of seeing her. Then he thought of the morrow. No plans had been made, and he would have an idle day. That would delay his banking account from increasing. He fell asleep with a determination to do some work to earn money. In the morning he spoke to Tom of the matter, who said:

"I'm with yer there. What do yer say ter buyin' up some wood at one o' the yards an' gettin' the 'orse agen an' earnin' a bit that way?"

Bill eagerly agreed and the two went to the stables. The same horse was dragged across

the yard and harnessed to the cart of yesterday. When he heard Bill's voice, his ears came forward and he whinnied with surprise and delight. Bill asked of the dilapidated looking man shuffling about the yard if the horse had had a feed.

"A bit o' a one," he answered. "It doesn't do ter feed 'em up too much. It makes 'em proud."

Bill laughed as he pointed to the horse's ribs, which stood out in painful fashion: "It 'ud take a 'ell of a lot o' feedin' ter cover them, let alone make 'im proud. Why don't yer fatten 'im up a bit? Yer'd get a better price fer the 'irin' of 'im."

The man made no reply. It was not his business. After going some distance, Bill said:

"Yer'd better stop 'ere, an' let me buy some feed. We can't work 'im 'ungry."

"Right oh!" answered Tom, drawing up to the kerb. "We'll go 'alves in this joint right through."

Bill jumped down, and soon returned with some feed. While loading the wood, the horse ate a good meal. Bill fancied it looked in better trim than yesterday. He was not nearly so nervous when spoken to, and did not shiver with fear when Bill suddenly stroked him.

Tom and Bill took it in turns to call "fire-wood!" as they went along. The first hour their call met with little success. Bill grew moody. Nearly all their capital had been sunk in this new venture. It also meant that they would have the wood left over at night and no place to stack it for future sales. Tom stopped the horse, which was looking weary and hot, with drawing the heavy load, and sat down on a doorstep.

The door suddenly opened, and a haggard, tired looking woman put her head out: "What

sort of wood have you got there?" she said, indicating the cart.

Bill jumped down and quickly brought her a couple of the best blocks.

The woman shook her head. "That's no good to me," she said. "I want wood chopped fine. I can't chop it, and my husband's not home."

"I'll chop it fer yer, if yer want ter buy," said Bill eagerly.

The woman nodded. "Come round to the back," she said, "and I will give you the axe to chop it with."

Bill disappeared round the back of the house with a basketful of wood, returning in a few minutes mopping his face but with a brighter expression, his basket swinging in his hand.

"I'm off ter buy a decent axe," he said, "an' then we'll get rif o' this load, an' never take firewood on agen. It's a silly game, but," here Bill set his teeth, "we've got ter get through without losin' any money, an' make a bit too."

Tom agreed. They drove to a shopping centre, and Tom bought an axe. Returning to a street with dwellings, Bill dismounted and knocked at a door.

"Any wood?" he asked of the woman who answered the knock. "Yer can buy from a shillin's worth, an' I'chop it fer yer free o' charge."

After a few more questions, and a careful scrutiny, Bill was allowed to take the wood to the back of the house and chop it, the woman standing by.

Before the end of the day the two men were tired and exhausted. Neither were accustomed to swinging an axe. It was Bill's lot to chop the last basketful of the wood. He cursed aloud. His back was aching, and his hands



were blistered. As he received the money for it, the woman said:

"It's a wonder ter me that the wood," pointing to the pile just chopped, "doesn't catch fire. I nought me husband could swear, but yer beat the lot."

"Yer shouldn't be listenin'," growled Bill, who was in no humor to listen to reproof. "Good day."

Neither men spoke very much at dinner that night, though later Tom said: "That wasn't a bad idea of yours," picking up the axe, which lay by his bed.

"A damn silly one it seems ter me," growled Bill. "All I know is that I only 'ope I never see one agen all the days o' me life. The vegetable game's me dart, fer a bit at any rate." And neither men thought of their wives that night.

The next morning as soon as Bill arose he called on Mrs. Treviss. She consented to allow the men for a small consideration to use a lock-up shed in the tiny yard as a store room for any vegetables they wished to store from day to day. Tom was delighted and that day bought an extra supply at the markets sufficient to give them work until the next market day.

From day to day the two men worked hard selling their goods. Tom was a wise purchaser, and they prospered. Each had now a banking account. Bill grudged to buy himself clothes. They washed their own rough shirts in Mrs. Treviss' yard and were now sleeping in a back room on top of the eating house. Mrs. Treviss had learnt to respect both men as honest hard workers. She also learn that each was trying to save sufficient to open a business for themselves.

One day Tom returned to find his shirt had been washed and ironed in his absence. He was pleased, for he hated washing clothes. Then

Bill found his likewise. Both men thanked Mrs. Treviss and offered to pay for them, but she refused.

One day Tom caught a bad cold, and was unable to go out with Bill. As he lay in bed feeling thoroughly miserable, the door opened and Tom looked round to see his wife standing just inside.

"Milly!" he said hoarsely, and sprang out of bed.

His wife burst into tears. "Oh Tom!" she cried. "I am so sorry dear."

"Not a word, my girl," said Tom when he had kissed her tears away. "I'm ter blame. I'd no business ter let yer get away from me."

"Never mind," she said, "we won't say any more, but you're to come home now with me. I'm living with my sister, and we've arranged for you to come there till we see what we are going to do."

Tom agreed, glad to be with his wife again, and packing his things into a bundle, picked them up ready to depart. Then he threw them down again. "No," he said. "I can't leave Bill like that. He's been one o' the best pals a feller ever 'ad. You'd better go without me till I see what I'm goin' ter do."

His wife laughed. "No need to worry over that. "Ever since I got your address an' knew how you both were working hard to save money I've been on the lookout for a shop, and last week I took one on a lease and partly furnished it. I wasn't going to say a word about it until it was all fixed up, but I couldn't resist coming to-day, as you were ill. There's room for Bill, too, and a stable at the back to keep a horse and cart."

Tom could hardly believe his ears. He folded his little wife in his arms and warm tears filled his eyes. He decided to stay there for

that evening so as not to inconvenience his wife's sister, and then to enter their new home to-morrow.

Bill was surprised and pleased at the altered prospects, especially as the business was to be divided into three equal shares. The wife one share for taking her part in the shop, and the men theirs for sharing the work. His first question was:

"We must 'ave a 'orse, why not Dandy?"

Husband and wife laughed at the suggestion. No! They wanted a finer horse than Dandy. Bill declared that with good food and grooming the horse would be made to look quite respectable. He was allowed to have his way, and a few days later Dandy was bought at a cheap figure and in due course installed in the stable.

Both men worked hard preparing the new shop, which was in a busy centre. It was an excellent experience for Bill, who had never seen the inside running of a business. He learnt many things—the most valuable of all that, to make a successful business of any kind, all the members of it must be industrious. The shop and stock must be kept in good order. Customers must be courteously treated, and first class goods must be stocked.

The business prospered, both in the shop and the outside connection which was carefully studied by Bill and catered for by Tom, who was an excellent buyer. Milly saw that the stock was well sorted and turned over and the shop well kept. She was a good manager in the home. Bill's clothes were kept clean and mended. They were a happy trio. As the days flew by Bill saw his banking account gradually increase. He was longing to reach a certain sum of money, so that he could insert an ad-

vertisement for Sarah to know and he to receive an answer. It was a proud day for him when he called at the "Herald" office and lodged the following:

Bill saved one hundred pounds. Longing to hear from Sally. He sends his love. Telegraph to G.P.O. anxiously waiting.

### Chapter XIII.

To Sarah Monday seemed as though it never would arrive, and it was an excited woman who danced before the clock as the time approached for the return of the car bringing Violet May to her with news of Bill. She could not rest in the house, but hurried along the road to meet her. At last she saw the car in the distance. As it swept along she was nearly run over in her eagerness to stop it. James brought it suddenly to a standstill which woke up Violet May from her dreams of grandeur.

She sat up from the reclining attitude that she imagined was consistent with a well bred lady accustomed all her life to ride in motor cars and turning a haughty face towards James was about to reprimand him, when she saw Sarah. She shrieked, flung her arms round her neck, and lovingly kissed her. James sat and looked on for a moment, then started the car.

"So, I'm 'ere at last," said Violet May breathlessly. "I've 'ad such a diy, what with pack-in' an' what not. It took me all me time ter catch the trine. 'Ow do yer like me koschume? Smart, ain't it? I got the style from a pic-chur o' Lady-er-I fergit 'er nime for the minit, but it's the ded spit o' it. The 'at matched well, too, don't yer think?" and Violet stroked her skirt and patted her hat, thoroughly pleased with her startling appearance. Sarah did not immediately reply. She went on. "Oh! I've got such 'eaps ter tell yer when I got time."

Sarah whispered: "Have you seen Bill lately? Does he look well?"

"Um!" nodded Violet, 'an' 'e's gettin' on a treat. I saw 'im only the day before yesterdiy,



at least I think it was that diy, let me think."

"Never mind what day, Violet. Did you speak to him? Did you tell him where I was?"

"'Old 'ard now," said Violet holding up her hand, "I can't answer all them questions at oncst. It only makes me flurried if I do an' yer know quite well I'm no good if I gets the least bit flurried. It seems ter put me 'eart in me mouth."

Sarah squeezed her arm, too happy to feel annoyed at anything. She had only to wait a little time and she would hear all the news of Bill. She sat dreaming of him, scarcely hearing the constant stream of Violet's chatter.

Entry into the gates awoke her. She got out and helped Violet to alight, then hurried into the house. Violet waved her hand towards James and said in what she imagined were the tones used by those moving in the best circles:

"Bring in them there shoot cases uv mine," and prepared to sail away.

James picked up the suit cases and flung them to the ground, saying: "You take them in yourself. And another thing I want to tell you is to mind who you're talking to. Ever since you got in the car you've done nothing but stick on airs and graces, and—" as the car moved off he called in louder tones, "they don't suit you, neither!"

Poor Violet May's face turned white and red with emotion. She had no idea that people had guessed her weakness of posing as a lady. The tears filled her eyes. As she entered her room with Sarah, her emotions proved too much for her and she flung herself on to the bed and sobbed bitterly. Sarah, who had heard all that had passed, wisely said nothing until the storm had partly subsided, then she bent over and gathering violet in her arms lovingly kissed her and whispered comforting words. Soon her

tears ceased, and she kissed Sarah saying in a tragical voice:

"I'm done fer life pretendin' ter be what I ain't," then she glanced down at her ridiculous costume and continued: "an' I did think I looked the real lidy in 'em. Never mind," she continued fiercely dabbing her eyes, "I can see it's no good, I'll 'ave ter be natcher. I could see it comin' on a long time but I wouldn't give in. "Now," she finished triumphantly, and with a wave of her hand, "that's the end uv it." By the time she had changed her dress to a black one with a dainty cap and apron, her tears had all disappeared and she was smiling. She felt a pang when Sarah suggested that her hair be damped to remove the wild frizzy appearance and allow her hair to fall in its own soft waves over her forehead. She followed Sarah's good advice, and was obliged to confess that her appearance was improved. It was an awkward moment when James entered the kitchen, especially as he stared at the really nice appearance of Violet, with her pretty English complexion without the cheap powder that had so freely covered it in her arrival. Neither James nor Violet spoke for some time until later when at their dinner James asked Violet to pass the salt. Her smile when doing so was very appealing. James, who was really a fine fellow at heart, felt touched by her expression. For a time he conversed only with Sarah, until Violet's emotion had somewhat passed away and she could glance at him without that hurt look, but that evening saw a very subdued Violet May.

Later, when alone with Sarah, she partly forgot her trouble as she recited the events of the weeks that had elapsed since her friend's departure. Sarah listened eagerly to the full report of the picture show episode, occasionally interrupting her to ask for a fuller description of

Bill's appearance. The crowning triumph of Violet May's recital was when she had told how she had diplomatically made friends with Milly's sister and had heard of Bill's industry and perseverance to save money for Sally's sake. Tears of happiness filled Sarah's eyes as she realised that it was only a question of weeks now before she would hear from him. She knelt down and thanked God for giving her such a good husband. Both women cried with happiness. It was far into the night ere they slept.

The next morning Sarah directed Violet in her duties. The capable Violet did not need much tuition. She loved to see the bedrooms look clean and neat. Soon she began to sing. Her voice was thin and rather reedy, with a tendency to linger over the notes she was fond of. Her repertoire consisted of descriptive matter of the pathetic type, and she would put in a free sob when she felt inclined, which was often. She loved to sing of blighted love and broken hearts. As she sang, in what she fondly imagined were soprano notes, her voice rang through the house.

Norah went in search of Sarah who was in the laundry outside the main building.

"Mrs. Harris," she said in worried tones, "I do wish you would stop Jones from making such noises at her work. They are hideous!"

"What is she doing?" asked Sarah, with a puzzled frown. "As a rule she works so quietly."

"Well the air up here must have a disturbing effect, for she is singing most mournful songs. Her voice is dreadful, and we really cannot stand it."

Sarah smiled as she wiped her hands, preparing to depart. "It is," she acknowledged. "Mrs. Ellis was obliged to stop her when she was about. But as soon as she went out, Violet

would let forth and sing all she knew, and she would go over the ones she liked best. Even the neighbors complained, but Mrs. Ellis never took any notice of them. She always found that Violet was the better for it. It seemed to make her good tempered."

Norah put her hand to her head. "And we have to put up with those hideous noises to keep the maid good tempered," she murmured to herself.

"Not at all, Miss Norah," Sarah replied as she opened the door.

"O-oh! listen to that," said Norah, putting her hand over her ears as if to shut out the penetrating sound. A high drawn out wail, which hung in the air as if it would never cease, came to their ears as they lingered for one moment at the open door. Then, Sarah picked up her skirt in one hand to give freedom to her feet, and flew to the house. Norah lingered. She heard the note suddenly end, as though the singer had suddenly dropped dead. She almost felt afraid to venture into the house. Would Jones give notice on the spot?

Violet, who had felt a little bit miserable as she thought over the previous night's reproof from James, began her work by singing mournful tunes in a subdued voice. Then, as the sentiment of the songs overcame her, or, as she would have expressed it, 'made 'er feel reel miserable but 'appy,' she forgot her present surroundings and gave full vent to her feelings. The climax came as she neared the end of Tosti's Good Bye." She had ceased work and was standing in the middle of the room, filling it and vast spaces beyond with the sound of "Good boi f'r ever," and had reached the highest sound of one of the many farewells, when Sarah entered the room with her hands covering her ears.



"Violet! Violet! for pity's sake stop that row."

Violet's voice cracked on the top note. Dead silence followed as she realised what she had done.

Roused from her usual sweet temper, Sarah continued: "You must be mad to go on like that. Do you think anyone will put up with that?"

Violet May recovered her voice sufficiently to say: "Goo' gracious! I 'ad no idea anyone could 'ear me. I fergot, an' let meself go as it were."

"Go!" ejaculated Sarah. "You drove Miss Norah from the house, and perhaps all the others for all I know."

"All the others are gorn fer a walk," said Violet in subdued tones. Then as she remembered the reproof of yesterday, she burst out crying.

"I'm always doin' somethin' or the other since I came. I think the best thing I can do is ter git back as fast as I come."

"What nonsense, Violet," said Sarah, putting an arm round her waist. "You must learn to be spoken to, especially if you are in the wrong."

"Well," said Violet in muffled tones, "I don't seem ter be able ter do anythin' right."

"What rubbish," said Sarah with a smile as she caught sight of Violet May's woebegone expression. "You are doing everything right. The room looks beautifully clean." Then she gave the unhappy girl a fond squeeze saying in sincere tones: "No one can clean a room just like you can, dear. It looks a picture."

Violet dried her eyes with a fierce movement. "I am a fool ter tike things yer siy in the wrong manner; an' then git the 'uff. But," shaking her duster with a determined movement and a toss of her head; "that's the end uv me sing-in'. O-oh," she sighed, "it seems ter me I'm comin' ter the end uv everythin' what with one



thing an' the other; 'owever, I suppose it's fer the best."

Sarah's work that day was done in a dream of happiness. As soon as the "Herald" was read by the family, she seized it and scanned the personal column. No, it did not contain a message for her. She had now every faith that one day it would do so, and very soon. Was he not steadily working? and was it not for her? Her troubles of the past two years completely faded from her mind. All that she remembered was that she loved Bill and that he must surely love her very much to work as he was doing. A thought did cross her mind that he might have fallen in love with someone else and it was she that was the cause of his industry, but soon that thought departed. She knew her Bill.

At the end of the second day of Violet's arrival, she felt obliged to protest.

"Look 'ere," Sarah, she said in injured tones, "I've just about 'ad enough of 'Ow did 'e look, Violet?" an' "was 'e smilin' when yer caught sight uv im?" Yer might just as well ask me: if 'is 'air was parted in the middle or at the side!"

Sarah laughed merrily at Violet May's expression. She caught her round the waist and made her step lively for a minute or two, and Violet ended by laughing as heartily as her companion. "Look 'ere," she said, "I've got two minds ter learn darncin'. Me mother was a born darncer. She ought ter 'ave bin a actress. Every time she came 'ome from the play, she'd let us 'ave the lot. Sometimes she went a bit too far an' got that worked up we'd 'ave ter stop 'er in the midst uv s'howin' us 'ow things went on the stige. At the murder scenes she'd make yer blood curdle she was so reel. She was a great'un was mother."

"Is she dead, Violet?" asked Sarah gently.

"No," said Violet pausing; then suddenly she burst into tears.

"What's the matter, dear?" asked Sarah, putting an arm round the sobbing girl.

"I don't know what yer will think uv me, but I 'ad ter leave 'ome. I couldn't stand it no longer. She—" here the girl's sobs grew worse.

"Never mind, Violet," said Sarah. "It doesn't matter what happened to her. Nothing will make me think any the less of you, dear."

"'Ow!" said Violet straightening herself up and dabbing fiercely at her eyes. "When I comes ter think uv all the trouble that the drink gits yer into, I wonder 'ow they kun do it. There was me mother. A nicer woman it 'ud be 'ard ter find when she left it alone, but a perfect beauty when she let 'erself go, as the sayin' is. Sometimes," here Violet drew her breath through her teeth, "my word! we'd 'ave a picnic. She'd tike a turn at larfin' an' then screeching' an' then she'd go into tears, 'eaps an' 'eaps uv 'em. We was all worn out by the time she was played out."

Sarah nodded in sympathy.

"The worst uv it was," continued Violet, thoroughly enjoying the luxury of confiding her troubles, "she was always in an' out."

"In and out?" questioned Sarah, puzzled.

"Um," nodded Violet. "Gettin' lumbered." Then as she caught sight of her companion's expression she continued: "You know," impatiently, "took up. Landed in quod."

"Oh!" said Sarah, laughing at the quaint expression. "I didn't know at first what you meant." The tragedy of the story was broken by its recital.

"How long is it since you left England, Violet?"

"About two an' a 'arf years be now," replied

the girl thoughtfully. "She must be dead be this. She was in a bad way the larst letter I 'ad from father. She 'ad a bad attack o' pewmonya an' it must 'ave settled 'er. Poor mother," sighed Violet.

Sarah comforted her with a loving pressure of the hand. Violet was rapidly recovering her bright self.

The days passed quickly and happily for both girls.

Miss Norah would sometimes pass and say to herself: "Is it possible that this is the same house as that of a few weeks ago? Why, the work seems no trouble whatever."

### Chapter XIV.

Since the arrival of Violet May, James had found but little pleasure in lingering in the kitchen. He had formed a wrong impression of her. He attributed her industry and cleanliness to Sarah's promptings, not to her own initiative. He also thought her extravagant and somewhat flighty, two grave faults in his eyes. Ever since his reproof, Violet had lost her gaiety and love of fun in his presence. She was mostly silent, thereby losing half her charm. He grudgingly admired her neat black dress and cap which was always dainty and clean, but again to Sarah he gave the credit of it. She was always neat. He had been quite prepared to have allowed himself to become interested in Sarah, and it had been somewhat a shock to find that her husband was alive and also that Sarah was very much in love with him. It was not difficult to read the girl's character. It was written in her sweet face and voice. Being naturally a lover of the feminine and having a fair share of good looks, with a cautious disposition, he had grown somewhat fastidious according to his views. It was a trifle dull now that Violet May had arrived. She monopolised Sarah, to whom he had turned for good advice in regard to his personal appearance. The drooping curl on his forehead was now brushed straight back. Even the wave in it, of which he had been very proud, he had encouraged to straighten out a trifle. It had been a great effort at first to follow the delicate suggestion. When he had appeared in the kitchen for the first time with his hair brushed back in shining waves, he eyed Sarah anxiously. She had smiled and nodded approv-

al. "Looks ever so much nicer," were her words. He remembered the happy glow her words caused him, and requested earnestly that she would continue to take the same interest in him. Her reply had been somewhat of a setback.

"Yes," she had answered, "providing you know that my corrections are made for your good and not because you imagine I admire you." That reply of hers had occasioned a rare vein of thought. The male desire of conquering the resisting female crossed his mind. He would make her like him in spite of her words. He had no thought that he could not succeed. His had been a triumphal march through his feminine world. For twenty four hours he had laid seige, putting forth all his charms. The climax had come when he placed an arm round her waist, giving it a gentle squeeze. Even now the memory of the little scene caused his face to blush. Sarah had stood stock still, as though dazed at his daring, then had lifted her eyes to his and said:

"I wonder what sort of a man you are to do such a thing to me? You know that I am a married woman, and that I love my husband." Then her eyes had filled with tears. "Surely," she added, "I have never given you encouragement to do such a thing."

James remembered how his arm had dropped away from her figure, and he stood horrified at the manner in which she had taken his advances. It was a dreadful moment for him. Hastily he had apologised, again and again. The pardon was granted in Sarah's sweet manner. From that day he had never attempted the slightest familiarity. The occasion was never alluded to. Needless to say, Sarah did not mention it to Violet.

The first Saturday of her arrival, Sarah asked



Miss Norah's permission to go with Violet into Katoomba to the picture show. She was pleased to grant the simple request, and told James to drive them in the car to the village. James hurried into the kitchen. The two girls were sitting down at the table drinking tea.

"Miss Norah," he said, "told me to drive you into Katoomba in the car. M-m-may I sit with you at the pictures?" looking at Sarah for permission. Sarah hesitated as she felt Violet tug at her skirt.

Then James did a foreign thing; he stooped to plead.

"Please do."

Again Sarah felt her dress pulled. She glanced at Violet and caught her expression. She blushed as she saw James intercept the glance, and before she had finished her reply of: "Please, I would rather Violet and I go alone," went out of the kitchen. James could hardly believe his eyesight. Violet, of whom he had such a proper opinion, to refuse his company. He could not believe it. Had his sight believed him? No! He would have liked to think so, but he was no fool. Why did she not want his society? All girls desired male escort when they could get it, at least that had been his experience. Only to think that Violet had refused it. He could have understood it if it had been Sarah. Surely James must be dreaming. Then he felt angry. Never, he vowed, would he stoop to ask any woman, let alone Violet May, to an entertainment again. He had actually intended to pay the entrance fee for the girls. Surely that was an inducement. He cursed Violet in his thoughts. Since her arrival he had not been nearly so happy. He blamed her for his dullness.

The drive to Katoomba was made in silence. He even refused to look round when they

alighted. He felt peeved. Nevertheless he was just behind them, and heard Violet insist on paying for both. He frowned. That further confirmed his opinion of her. She was extravagant and reckless. Both girls aroused a slight interest amongst the men that lounged at the entrance. James looked at them critically. Yes, he considered they looked quite nice. Sarah had always won his approval with her attire. He looked again at Violet. He was obliged to confess that her appearance had improved since her arrival; her dress was quiet and according to his idea, in good taste. He sat just behind them. Neither girl looked round; they were too much interested in the people in front of them.

As the pictures were flashed on the screen he could hear some of Violet's quaint expressions and Sarah's low laughter. He bent forward as far as he dared. He did not want to make himself known. He was enjoying himself. When a heroic woman had gone through many trials and had reached the height of her misery, he saw Violet quietly sobbing and Sarah drying her eyes, and he found that his eyes, too, were wet, and he felt a nasty lump in his throat. It was his first experience of the kind in a picture show. In the interval he sat back and looked about him. Two young fellows sat across the aisle and were gazing at the two girls. He frowned and glanced hastily at them to see if they looked encouragement. His frown relaxed. They had not noticed the men and were busy discussing what they had seen. As the lights were lowered, he saw an empty seat next to Violet. He felt inclined to sit in it, until he thought of his rebuff. Before he could make up his mind what to do, one of the two young men rose and sat in it. Violet did not take any notice. Then he saw her fidget and move slight-

ly nearer to Sarah. James clenched his hands, but did not move. He waited to see what the girl would do. At last she looked up to the intruder. Here eye was wrathful. He heard her say in a fierce whisper: "Look 'ere, yohng feller-me-lad, I've 'ad jist about enough of yer pushin' an' scroughin' do yer 'ear me? Now git."

The man made no attempt to move, but smiled at the excited girl.

"It's alright," he said soothingly. "Me foot just happened to move."

"Well, yer keep yer foot ter yerself fer the fucher. I don't want it near mine that's all." She turned in answer to a nudge from Sarah and said: "I made no mistake about that gentleman, 'e's up ter no good.

James saw them give their attention again to the screen. His hands unclenched. James felt pleased at Violet's ability to take care of herself. His opinion was slowly altering.

The man soon rose and returned to his companion. As the piano played "God save the King," James saw the two men manoeuvre to place themselves immediately behind the girls as they walked out. He watched and waited ready to come forward if necessary. As they paused on the step waiting for James' appearance, the man who had spoken to Violet said: "Good evening, miss. Going far?"

"'Ow dare yer speak ter me?" she demanded. "It's like yer impudence!"

Sarah whispered: "Don't say anything more. Here's James," she finished in tones of relief.

James looked with steely eyes at the man. "Anything you want?" he demanded coldly.

The young fellow shuffled his feet as he muttered. "It's all right, I made a mistake. I thought I knew the young lady." He made a

quick retreat and soon disappeared with his companion in the crowd.

James and Sarah listened in amused silence during the homeward drive to Violet May's views of the men of to-day, and what she would do to one in particular.

As they sat at supper, James winked at Sarah and said to Violet, whose face was still hot at the recollection: "You might have given the fellow encouragement and didn't know it."

"Me!" she ejaculated in scornful tones. "Give that feller encouragement! I wouldn't think o' such a thing. Besides, I'd know full well if I 'ad 'ad a 'and in it."

Perhaps it was an eye that did it," said James, smiling at his own wit. But Violet was seriously offended and, as she expressed it, "All uv an 'eat at the thought of it." But like the sunny nature she was, soon forgot the insult and grew quite chatty.

As the days flew by in happy industry, the friendship between the three workers deepened. James gradually ceased to look for the faults of Violet May. He was becoming accustomed to the cockney voice and accent, which at first rather irritated him. Many times he enjoyed the girl's quaint humor and made excuses to enter the kitchen on purpose to hear her say something funny. Sarah smiled softly, and kept her thoughts to herself.

One never to be forgotten day, Sarah picked up the "Herald" and read:

Bill saved one hundred pounds. Longing to hear from Sally. He sends his love. Telegraph to G.P.O. anxiously waiting.

As she read it she nearly fainted. Could it be possible? Was it meant for her? Yes, it must be. Bill had saved one hundred pounds all for her, and best of all, he loved her. Her heart felt ready to burst with happiness. Again



she read the message. Fancy Bill anxiously waiting, for news of her! It seemed years since he had even cared, let alone anxiously waited to hear from her. She rushed into her room and flinging herself into a chair gave herself up to the luxury of happy thought. Then a reverent feeling of thankfulness overcame her and she knelt down by the bed and thanked God for His goodness in restoring her husband to her. She rose feeling wonderfully happy and excited, and danced away in search of Violet.

"Oh Violet!" she cried, waving the "Herald" in the air, "just look at this!"

Violet May took the paper and read it.

"Well, I never," she gasped. "'Ood 'ave thought it! Don't that beat the band. 'E's a plum orlright. Turned out trumps in the end. I 'ad an idea when I saw 'im standin' up in that there cart 'e'd got a move on. Now what are yer goin' ter do?"

"On! I must get to Sydney as fast as I can," replied Sarah feverishly.

"Now stop jist there," said Violet, "an' sit down a minit," pointing with a trembling hand to a chair. "Yer keep carm a bit or else you'll go right off yer onion with excitement." Sarah sat down. "Now listen ter me. The best thing yer kin do is ter tell Miss Norah all about it, then ask her ter 'phone up ter the post office ter send a tellygram ter Bill ter ask 'im ter come up ter yer 'ere. What do yer say ter that? Not a bad idea, eh?"

"Oh! I can't wait for all that. I must get down to him."

"Keep carm, do keep carm," implored Violet May. "Now kin yer tell me the difference in yer tearin' ter Sydney or 'im comin' up 'ere? It tikes jist the sime time, besides it's up to 'im ter do the chasin' act still it strikes me."

"You're right," said Sarah. "Oh Violet!"



putting her arms round her friend, "I am so happy I don't know what to do with myself."

"I do," returned Violet, her face working. "You jist get a move on and send that there tellygram." Sarah danced from the room.

Poor Violet, as soon as she was alone, burst into tears. "That's the end uv me, I reckon," she sobbed. "She'll join 'im an' won't think no more uv 'er friend. I'm dead unlucky, so I am." Then better thoughts came into her mind. She dried her eyes. "Well, I am a beauty ter begrudge the poor girl a bit uv 'appiness after all she 'as gorn through fer 'im. Oh! she finished, "I 'ates men, they're all alike. Comes inter a woman's life an' blights 'arf uv them."

Sarah re-entered the room, her face beaming. "Miss Norah has sent the wire, and if Bill gets it in time he will be able to catch the midday train." Then she caught sight of Violet's face, and guessed the trouble.

"You old silly," she cried as she took the girl in her arms. "It won't make the slightest difference to our friendship."

"Don't tell me that," said Violet fiercely, struggling to escape the loving embrace. "I knows full well it will. Yer will never be the same ter me any more. O-oh," she sobbed, "an' only ter think 'ow 'appy I was."

"But I wasn't so happy away from Bill," replied Sarah softly.

Violet looked up, her eyes full of tears. "O' course yer weren't," she replied, "an' it's like me ter think only uv meself."

Sarah smiled. "No, dear, that's one thing you do not. You are most unselfish. Now dry your eyes."

Violet did as she was told and soon was smiling nearly as gaily as her friend. The first shock of future separation was over.

Sarah went in search of James to tell him the glad tidings.

"I know all about it," he said, interrupting her, "Miss Norah gave me instructions to look out for him when I meet the master by the same train. Now tell me what he is like, so that I'll know him when I see him."

Sarah gave a full description of her husband as he appeared to her.

"Some man," assented James when Sarah had paused to take breath. "Now come back to earth and let me know what he really looks like, or else I'll be sure to miss him. He don't seem real to me."

Sarah rushed away, returning with Bill's portrait, which had become somewhat blurred through constantly being kissed.

"Here!" she cried triumphantly as she presented the portrait to him. "Now isn't he a handsome man?"

"Well, I wouldn't like to go as far as that," replied James cautiously. "But he's not too bad."

"Bad!" exclaimed Sarah, snatching the photo and kissing it. "He's a darling, that's what he is."

Miss Norah was full of sympathy for Sarah and realised that she was soon to lose a treasure in her. She went in search of Violet, and their friendly talk resulted in the arrangement that Violet would take Sarah's place in the kitchen, and that another maid should be engaged in her place.

At last the hour came for James to depart to meet the train that was to bring Bill to her. Sarah had been too excited to eat lunch, and as she dressed herself her hands trembled with excitement.

"Ere," said Violet, appearing in the doorway with a tray of dainty food. "We don't want

any breakdowns jist as 'e comes on the scene. You've got t'eat this," putting down the tray in front of Sarah.

"Oh, I couldn't, thank you, Violet. I feel sick with excitement."

"That's it," said Violet. "Now don't let me 'ear yer siy as 'ow yer can't eat. Yer got to, an' that 's the end uv it. Now do," she pleaded, "jist ter please me."

Sarah did as she was told, and the feeling of excitement died down. "Suppose he doesn't come," she whispered as she anxiously surveyed herself in the mirror for the last time.

"Come!" said Violet briskly. "What nonsense! Wild 'orses won't keep 'im awiy if I know anythin' about the gentlemun."

"But supposing he doesn't get the telegram in time?"

"If sich a thing was to 'appen, I'd write ter the Prime Minister an' let 'im know what I think uv 'im," returned Violet briskly. Sich goin's on ought ter be shown up, that they ought. An' I'll be the one ter do it, let me tell yer that," she added, now thoroughly worked up.

"It's sure to be alright," said Sarah. "If the post office sent the message through when they received it, Bill would have two hours in which to catch the train. "Oh!" she cried, "there's the car! See if he is in it. I can't move."

Violet rushed away, returning with a most excited face. "E's 'ere. You stiy where yer are, an' I'll send 'im to yer. Now don't go blubberin' now. It's orlright." She gave her a hurried peck and vanished.

Sarah sat down trembling all over. Then came footsteps and she heard Violet's voice say: "She's in 'ere."

Bill entered.

She looked up into Bill's face, which was white with emotion, and then sank sobbing into

his outstretched arms. When they had slightly calmed down, Bill told her some of his experiences, Sarah looking into his face as if she would never take her eyes away again. When he told her how much he had missed her, she shed tears of happiness. The assurance of his love made her feel overjoyed. Violet interrupted them to say that the dinner in the dining room was over, and they could come to theirs in the kitchen. Later, Miss Norah came into the kitchen, and Sarah proudly introduced Bill. Whilst he and James were talking, Miss Norah said to Sarah:

"I rang up a nice boarding house not far from here, and asked them if they had room to take you and your husband this evening to stay a week if you wished. I thought you would like it."

"Oh Miss Norah! how kind of you to think of such a thing," said Sarah, her face beaming with happiness. "I have always wanted Bill to see the wonderful sights. Oh! I am so happy."

As Bill and Sarah walked slowly along the road, they talked of the past, at least Bill did, and then he told her of his idea of a small green-grocer's shop in one of the suburbs, but as near Tom and his wife as they could without interfering with one another's trade. Sarah listened in silent amazement as she followed his vigorous plans for the future. Could this be the lazy man who had rested on her for so long? What had worked the marvellous change in such a short time? Then she guessed it. Man must ever be the leader. If he depends upon a woman to supply the means of livelihood he deteriorates. A good man shoulders his responsibilities bravely, and it improves his character. Bill had been sheltered too long and devotedly, and his natural ability was unable to develop under her care. The very fact of his power to

earn money independently of a master had shown him the way to success in life. He also showed her that she was necessary to his happiness and that he sincerely loved her.

Silently she thanked God to have shown her the right way, and that her husband had proved himself to be a good man.

The week that followed was an extremely happy one for both. Even Violet May participated in their pleasure, for Miss Norah insisted on giving her two days off, providing she completed a certain amount of work before leaving after breakfast. She half regretted that arrangement, for one morning the breakfast bell was rung one hour too soon, Violet having mistaken seven for eight.

All too soon for Bill and Sarah the glorious week's holiday ended.

"What do you say to staying another week?" she asked persuasively.

"No," he answered very decidedly. "It's time I got a move on. I wrote to Tom since I've been up 'ere to look for a shop, an' to-day I got an answer to say that there's a feller about to be sold up. He couldn't make a do of it; so tomorrow I goes down to see all about it."

"Sold up." echoed Sarah. "If he couldn't make a success of it, I don't see how we can. You haven't had much experience, and I have had none at all." Pausing a moment, she continued: "Don't you think we had better wait a bit, Bill? I'll tell you what! Supposing you go on as you are with Mr. and Mrs. Treviss, and I will take a position as saleswoman until we have both had a little more experience in running a business?"

Bill put back his head and burst out laughing as he said: "That's no good to me, old girl. There ain't goin' to be you goin' one way an' me the other. I've had enough o' that game.



No, I'm goin' to open a shop an' you are comin' with me," said Bill decidedly.

"You know that I want to come with you, don't you dear?" said Sarah, pressing her husband's arm and smiling sweetly into his face.

"I know that, Sally, said Bill tenderly. 'You've been a trump right through. It's not like you to hesitate, though.'

"No, perhaps not; but I'm frightened that if we don't make a success of it at first, you'll get downhearted."

"Not me!" assured Bill. "We'll make a success of it orlright. I can't see 'ow we are goin' to fail. If I buys first class goods an' sells 'em at a reasonable figger, an' you keep the shop clean, as I know yer will, why, there's nothin' to it, but ter make it pay. Any'ow" squaring his shoulders, "I'm goin' to 'ave a dash at it," and bending down and kissing her softly he added: "I'm bound ter make a do of it, with you be me side, ain't I Sally ol' girl?"

Sarah smiled proudly into her husband's face as she sweetly replied: "You can do anything if you try, Bill."

The next morning Bill departed for Sydney, leaving Sarah to return to "Glenview" until he was ready to send for her.

James listened intently to the wonderful Bill's idea of opening a greengrocery business. Vague plans of his own floated through his brain, and he was keen to learn the first move in buying a business or in running one.

When Sarah received the first letter from her husband since his departure, James stood by while she read it. He knew that she would not be so confiding after she had digested the news and he was curious to know at once how a type of man as he judged Bill to be, would set about purchasing a business. As Sarah read to the end of the letter, James noted the dif-

ferent expressions that passed over her face.

"Ah!" she sighed in ecstasy. "Isn't he wonderful? Do you know," turning to him, "that Bill called upon the man at his shop and asked him the price of it with everything in it, and he asked an enormous sum, at least, it seemed so to Bill. Bill says," turning over the letter as if to find the exact words.

But James was too excited and he interrupted: "Never mind what he says," Mrs. Harris, tell us what he did."

"Ooh!" continued Sarah, drawing a deep breath. "He offered him just half." She paused to note the effect of the amazing news on her companion.

"Yes," he said, "and what happened then?"

"Oh! I must read it to you," said Sarah, and she began:

"After barneying fer a full arf our I got at me price. Before I puts down the deposit made im shew me is, recets. Tom ad warned me about that little lot an e got somebody to see as ow there was no bill o sale on it, so now it belongs ter you Us an Co., meanin just you an me, Sally!"

"I think that's all about the business," ended Sarah hurriedly.

"He's some man alright," said James admiringly. "He's not letting the grass grow under his feet."

Sarah sighed with happiness. "I'm to wait here until he sends for me. I do hope it won't belong."

"What won't be long," inquired Violet May. "I never 'eard yer noos yet."

Sarah then told her of some of the contents of Bill's letter.

"Now ain't 'e jist a marvel?" she said in all sincerity. "Here he was a few months ago not worth a tinker's cuss, an' terday 'e's goin' ter 'ave a dash at a business. My word!" turning to Sarah, "'e got a move on in the right di-

recshun when yer got awiy from that gentleman, an' now only ter think as 'ow yer'll be mistress uv all yer survey."

"Not quite as much as that," replied Sarah, smiling happily.

"Near enough, not but what yer don't deserve every bit uv 'appiness yer agoin' ter 'ave," said Violet warmly. "I think you've bin one uv the few wimmen as 'as 'ad reel patience with their 'usbands."

"What about you, Violet?" asked James, winking sliely at Sarah. "Wouldn't you give your husband a chance to prove himself?"

"Me?" asked Violet. "I dunno so much about that. I suppose if I luv'd 'im it 'ud be a different matter. But," sighing heavily, "I don't seem ter be ible ter fall in luv."

"How about trying with me?" asked James, giving a peculiar grin in Sarah's direction.

Violet, who caught the glance and interrupted it wrongly, flushed with anger.

"People 'oo 'as any sense at all don't talk that wiy," she said with dignity as she turned away.

James and Violet were almost as impatient as Sarah to receive the next letter. It was two days later when it arrived, and after hurrying through it, Sarah said:

"To-morrow I must go down to Sydney. Bill says that he closed with the bargaining too quickly and thinks I should see it first before he pays up."

"I thought so too, dear," put in Violet, "but I didn't like ter siy so ter damp yer feelin's as it were."

"Ever since I heard," went on Sarah thoughtfully, "that Bill was working and saving his earnings, I knew that I must not interfere too much with his plans. He showed me quite

plainly last week that he seems to have his head screwed on the right way and that he has thought out plans for the future. If I interfere with him too much," she added wisely, "he might sit back and let me do the lot again, and I had quite enough of that."

"Quite right, too," assented Violet.

Sarah went in search of Norah, and told her of her husband's wishes, and permission was granted to end her service in the middle of the week.

It was with mixed feelings that Sarah waved a fond and rather tearful farewell to Violet and James, who were left standing on the platform; but as the train neared Sydney station her face was bright with happy expectation of an early reunion of married life under more brilliant prospects.

Bill met his wife, and as they sat in the tram Sarah could not avoid noticing the change in her husband's face, as he briefly sketched his doings of the past few days. As they neared their destination, Bill said:

"I didn't want yer ter know a thing about the business till it was all settled, so as ter give yer a bit o' a surprise, but Tom an' 'is missus talked it over, an' so now we are on the way to the shop. I do 'ope," he added anxiously, "as 'ow you'll like it."

"I'm sure to like it, dear," replied his wife, pressing his arm.

"O' course it ain't quite up to the mark, else I wouldn't 'ave got it so cheap, but I think it'll be the makin's of a first class business when we git it goin'."

"I'm sure it will," said Sarah, smiling sweetly into her husband's face as she added earnestly: "I'll do my best. You know I will, don't you, Bill?"

"I know that, ol' girl," answered Bill, returning the loving pressure.

Sarah, in all her imagination, was not prepared for anything quite so dilapidated as the shop upon which Bill had paid a deposit. Her heart sank as she observed the dirt and filth of the interior. Rotting fruit and stale vegetables were piled in heaps behind the littered counters, and the sight of the fly-marked sweets that lay in untidy piles on the shelves, made her wonder how anyone ever dared to cross the threshold, much less buy anything in the shop. As the husband and wife went through the living rooms, Sarah pulled her husband by the sleeve and whispered:

"Bill, let's lose the deposit. We simply could not live in such a place."

Bill's face went white as he listened to her imploring words. He had set his heart on this shop, as Tom and he had watched it and had seen that some business had been done and both had reckoned that, with hard work and good stock, the concern would grow, eventually, into a profitable one. He had never thought that Sarah, who had been such a brave woman in facing hard circumstances, could fail to see the possibilities in the new venture.

Making an excuse to the present owner, they left the shop and walked some distance down the street until they came to a restaurant. While they drank tea, Bill pointed out to Sarah the possibilities that he and Tom had seen in the place. By the time Bill had finished talking, Sarah had grown more reasonable, and when the two returned to the shop, she looked at the new venture with more hopeful eyes, now that the advantages of its good position and size were explained. Notwithstanding, her heart sank a little as she saw her husband hand over



the balance of the payment. As the two left, Bill said:

"I thought yer were goin' ter turn it down, Sally. If you 'ad, I think it would 'ave settled me for a good bit. I set me 'eart on that shop. I'm sure," he added with conviction, "we're on the right track."

"I hope so," she murmured, and later, after a short conversation with Tom and his wife, whom Sarah immediately liked, she felt much better. She was not afraid of hard work, but she had dreamed of a shop with wide windows and everything looking clean and prosperous. When she realised that her husband's money could not possibly purchase any big prosperous business, she smiled at her expectations and was soon her old, bright self again. Both Tom and his wife were agreeably surprised at Sarah's dainty appearance and cheered their guests as they agreed that Sarah would soon be a good business woman. Both promised to give them every assistance, and not to be outdone in generosity, Tom offered Dandy, the horse, to Bill. He knew that he had grown very fond of the animal in spite of its raw boned appearance, which time and good food had but slightly improved. Bill's face grew red with happiness. He leaned across the table, grasped his friend's hand and said fervently:

"Tom, you're one o' the best!"

Everyone smiled as Tom replied, laughing: "Right oh! old bird. I'll take yer word fer it."

Sarah felt her cup of happiness overflowing, when Milly took her to her room and insisted that she and Bill stay the night.

As she lay on her husband's arm talking far into the night, Sarah felt convinced that the new venture would eventually prove a success.

The next day was exceedingly busy. Everyone rose before dawn, Tom to go to the mar-

kets, Bill to prepare the shop for fresh stock, and the two women to complete as much of the housework as they possibly could before breakfast, so as to be in readiness to slip into town to buy furniture on the time payment system.

There surely was no happier woman than Sarah, though she bought only the bare necessities for their third home, wisely waiting until she and Bill had become firmly established before completing their purchase.

The key of the shop door was handed by the previous owner to Bill, who immediately pasted up a placard announcing in large letters:

**"THIS BUSINESS CLOSED FOR TWO DAYS FOR COMPLETE RECONSTRUCTION."**

Then he shut the door and hurried to where Sarah was trying to discover whether, by dint of a thorough scrubbing, the floors would come clean.

She rose as he entered, and placing her arms around his neck shed a few happy tears. She now felt confident that everything would eventually prove a success. As husband and wife cleaned each room together Bill whistled and Sarah hummed the same tune. By the time the three rooms were thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, the new furniture arrived. After the men had gone, Sarah was more than excited as she pointed out to Bill the quality of each article, and though that night they were almost too tired to sleep, the suburb held no happier couple than this.

Tom bought the stock the day they opened the shop, while Bill and Sarah had everything spotlessly clean in readiness for its arrival. It was most exciting to them when the vegetables were carefully arranged in one window while the other was covered by a cloth waiting for confectionery to arrive.

As the day progressed, a few women came in

to buy. They were evidently living in the neighborhood, for each gave her opinion of the disgraceful manner in which the business had been carried on. Two women gave most cheering encouragement to husband and wife. When the door was closed finally for the night, both were quite surprised and more than delighted at the first day's takings.

With each successive day, Bill felt more confident to leave Sarah to look after the shop. She had become more accustomed to the type of woman who grumbled at the price of everything she saw, and who tried to beat down the amount to what she wished to pay. At first, Bill had been impatient at Sarah's timidity and the frequent manner in which she was brow beaten but gradually she learned to hold her own and remain firm to her original prices. Her husband, who had learnt already in his short experience that running accounts was not a success, had decided that no credit should be given to anyone. One day he heard a customer insist to Sarah that she must have credit, and he strode across the little shop.

"Look 'ere," he said angrily, "we don't want that talk 'ere. If yer can't pay cash, out yer go, an' take yer custom elsewhere."

The woman, disappointed that she could not take away the many things that were parcelled up, grew abusive.

"You're a nice one to run a business, I don't think," she exclaimed in tones of disappointment, looking round the shop, which by this time was somewhat untidy and almost empty of stock. She walked to the door and called in loud, contemptuous tones:

"Call this a business! Why it's nothing uv the sort. It's only a tuppenny 'appeny Gawd 'elp me show, that's what it is. An' as for you," she said, bravely facing the angry Bill,

“you’re nothing but a bully, that’s what you are. I pity ’er,” pointing to where Sarah stood with white, frightened face as she listened to the woman’s abuse. “Why, she’s frightened to death of yer, that’s what she is. Look at ’er!”

A small crowd had gathered to hear what the trouble was all about, and Bill’s face grew white as he stepped forward to drive the abusive woman from the doorway; when a policeman appeared.

Bill explained the cause of her insults and the policeman turned to the woman, who was trying to get through the crowd.

“Here,” he said warningly, “you take my advice and stop your little game. Now get a move on there and don’t let me see you at it again, else there’ll be trouble.”

The woman disappeared quickly, while the policeman turned to Bill and remarked:

“That’s an old game of hers. She tries it on everywhere. Sometimes it’s a success and she deals a few times at the same shop, till her account swells a bit, then she goes to fresh fields an’ pastures new.”

Bill, pleased that he had taken her measure correctly, grew quite good tempered again, and was inclined to grow boastful, when that night Sarah said: “Bill, I never knew you could hold your own as you did this evening. I thought you were a bit of a softie, but now . . . .” Sarah paused in admiration of her husband.

“It’s this way, Sarah. A feller that works fer wages ’as ter do what ’e’s told. ‘E ’as no money at stake an’ therefore stands ter lose none, while we ’ave put in all we’ve got an’ more. It’ll take us a good twelve months ter pull round with all the bills ter meet, so it’s up t’us ter make a do of it. Next week we’ll ’ave Dandy ’ome, an’ I’ll go out an’ try an’ work up



a connection. You 'aven't seen Dandy yet 'ave you, Sally?"

"No dear," she replied. "He was away at the blacksmith's the day I arrived, and we have been too busy and too tired since to call on Milly. What is Dandy like?"

"Dandy? He's a beaut! One o' the best 'orses I've struck."

Sarah laughed as she replied: "That's not saying much. Your experience is not a very big one, is it dear, considering that Dandy, as you call him, is the first horse you've ever had anything to do with?"

Bill smiled as he answered warmly: "He's one o' the most intelligent animals that ever I've seen. Why, 'e knows everything I say to 'im an' 'e follers me round like a bird. 'E's a beaut orlright. Thank goodness termorrer's Sunday an' I can 'ave a go at the stables an' call for 'im in the evening. I've arranged fer the loan of a cart till I can buy one."

Sarah was full of excited anticipation for the return of Bill with Dandy. She imagined, by her husband's enthusiasm, that the horse would have at least some pretence to youth and beauty. When she saw him perched on a huge raw boned brute, whose head alone would have condemned it in any show, she felt more disappointed than she cared to confess. As Bill slipped to the ground, he placed an arm round the horse's neck and putting his face against it, murmured soft words into ears that worked to and fro independently of one another.

"Isn't 'e one o' the best?" he asked enthusiastically.

"Yes," replied his wife, in hesitating tones.

"I tell yer this 'orse knows everythin' I ses to 'im, don't yer Dandy?"

The animal gave a slight skip, which made Sarah retreat hurriedly. She gave a scream as



she saw Dandy open his huge mouth, disclosing green looking teeth, and make a lunge at her husband. Bill laughed as he let the horse take his hand in his mouth and mumble it.

"We unnerstan' each other, don't we Dandy?" crooned Bill. "An' what's more, you're mine fer keeps, ain't yer ol' boy?"

The horse neighed in answer, then turned in playful fashion and made a short run at Sarah, who was standing at a safe distance. She gave a terriled scream and ran for her dear life into the kitchen and shut the door with a bang.

"Oh!" she grasped as she sank down into a chair, "Bill may understand and like him, but I never will. What an ugly brute."

As Bill put his head inside the door, he laughed as he said: "What yer want ter do is ter stand yer ground an' pat 'im. It's only play."

"Play!" echoed Sarah, whose face was still white with terror. "I don't call that play, when a great monster runs at you with a mouth as big as a tunnel and wants to eat you up."

"Not quite so bad as that, ol' girl. I think 'e's a bonza."

Sarah did not reply. She was firmly of the opinion that nothing Bill could say or do would alter her opinion of Dandy.

Months hence she learnt to stroke his nose, but with one foot poised ready for flight.

As the weeks progresses, the business prospered, until Sarah was fully satisfied that Bill's first venture in the field of commerce was a wise one. She was more of the opinion that Bill was the most wonderful of husbands, while Bill was equally of the opinion that she was a wonderful woman, and better still, the best of wives.



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