

TALES  
OF THE  
DANDENONGS

*(Fourth Series)*



By JAMES HUME-COOK

MCP

**With the Compliments**  
.. and ..  
**Good Wishes**  
.. of ..  
**Mr. & Mrs. J. Hume-Cook**

**Christmas and New Year**  
**1940-1941**

TALES

OF THE

DANDENONGS

*(Fourth Series)*



By JAMES HUME-COOK

## FOREWORD

---

The following Tales—like the first, second and third series, issued in 1935, 1938, and 1939 respectively—have their settings in the Dandenong Hills. The reasons, as set forth in the first Story—“Nellie Moir”—may be here re-stated:—

“There is always something doing in the Hills. Amid the Hills the human heart beats stronger and the mind is more alert. Though they seem to brood, to doze, they are none the less awake to all that matters. From every peak and shoulder there is to be seen another view, and, to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, there is much more to be noted than can be imagined. Their variety is measureless. Within their depths and on their heights it is the unexpected that always happens. Surprise lurks everywhere, and there is no manner of man that cannot be taken unawares.”

No copies of this booklet will be offered for sale, the whole edition having been reserved for distribution amongst friends.

If any reader cares to express an opinion, it would be esteemed a favour to receive a letter saying which Tale was liked the best.

JAMES HUME-COOK.

Brighton, Melbourne,

Australia.

December, 1940.

---

THE CHARACTERS IN THESE STORIES  
ARE FICTITIOUS.

# Tales of the Dandenongs

---

## “MOLLY’S PRAYERS.”

“**O**H! Stop it!” said Molly Brown to herself. “If you keep on thinking how lonely you are you’ll get ‘the miserables’ again! Get on with your work, and, someday, something’ll happen to put matters right! It must!”

::            ::            ::

Molly Brown was nearly twenty-four. At twenty she had been left an orphan, and all the money she had in the world—mostly her own hard savings—amounted to a little over £200.

Thinking to better her position, she had opened a small Guest House at Ferny Creek, in the Dandenong Hills. The decision to make the venture was partly due to the remembrance of a very happy holiday she had once spent at Olinda, and partly to an innate desire to become her own mistress. She was ambitious, and dreamed of the day when all she would have to do would be to direct and supervise a staff of her own!

But she soon found that toiling for herself was even harder than working for others. She seemed to be going from early morning until late at night. Her duties were never done! Worse still, the business was not nearly as remunerative as she had expected it to be. After almost four years of strenuous battling against all sorts of troubles her financial progress was very slight. In addition, the fact that she had to be cook, waitress, housemaid and manageress all in one, was beginning to tell on her nerves. Besides, she was lonely—desperately lonely. Thus it was that, occasionally, she reprimanded herself for harbouring depressing thoughts!

Sometimes, however—when the day’s tasks were over—she could not fling such thinking aside. So it was that, one summer night, weary and desolate, she threw herself face

downwards upon her bed. A life of drudgery and loneliness stared her in the eyes. She could see no end to the situation; no relief from her state; and, thoroughly overcome with the pain that surged at her heart, she sobbed and cried like a lost child.

Suddenly she ceased. With something of the natural vigor that usually characterised her actions, she started to pray:

“Oh! God!” she said. “I don’t know how to pray! I’ve never prayed in my life before! If I’m not doing it in the right way please forgive me! But I do want to tell You how I feel, and I do want You to help me! I’m so lonely! Oh! so horribly lonely! My Father and Mother are dead—but of course You know that—and I’m all by myself in the world. And I do work so hard! And oh!—I so honestly try to do the right thing by everybody, and to get on! But I’ve no friends, and no one to love me—not one! Please God why can’t I have a husband who would be strong and help me and love me? No men like that ever come here! I never see such men—unless they are married; only people who are old, or not very well! I’ve got no chance at all! And yet I’m as good as hundreds of other young women who’ve a sweetheart, or a husband, or a son or a daughter or something. Oh! please God! listen to what I say! Don’t take any notice of how I’m saying it! Just look at me, and look into me, and You’ll know how I want to be loved and to love somebody myself! Please listen! Do listen and don’t turn me down!”

::            ::            ::

For a minute or two after this unburdening of her soul Molly did not move. She just lay still, her face buried in the pillow. Then the strangest thing happened!

She had entered the room with a lighted lamp in her hand. This she set upon a bedside table before throwing herself on top of the bed. But, as was usually the case, she had left the window wide open, and, through it, as she would have realised had she given the matter a thought, all that she said could be distinctly heard in the garden. Truth to tell, her voice was so carried out, and thus it came about that—during her prayer—into the window casement a head was quietly thrust, and a pair of keen eyes, together with an equally keen pair of ears, were intently taking in the whole situation. As she settled into silence a strong but mellow voice asked:

"What's the matter little woman! Can I help you?"

In a flash Molly Brown was on her feet.

"Who are you? What's your name?" she sharply queried.

"Jim!" he replied, with a quizzical smile, and added: "Christened James! Means 'Love' a school-master told me once!"

And the peculiar emphasis he put upon the word "love" even without the humorous grin that accompanied it—would have disarmed anybody.

"Can I come in?" he asked.

"No you can't!" replied Molly, indignantly asserting herself.

"No! Of course not! Wouldn't be right! Didn't think of that!" said Jim apologetically.

"Well! How about comin' out? I feel I'd like to talk to you a bit. Got a notion we might help each other, for I'm in a bit of trouble meself!"

And to her own astonishment, instead of ordering him away, Molly came out to him.

"Let's sit down on the bench!" said he, composedly. "I've got something to say to you that I think is pretty important, and I want to begin at the beginnin' or I'll get it all wrong! You've got me all tied up, because I heard what you was prayin' about!"

When they were seated he went on:

"Name's James Whyte. Spelt with a Y! Half Scotch—on me Father's side! And very proud he was of it too! But me, I'm just a plain ordinary man. Got some education; not much! Been to the War. Was wounded with shrapnel. Got it in the back! No! Wasn't runnin' away! Damn thing burst behind me, and I got a few splinters that had to be taken out. Better now, and fit for any kind o' work. Just like I used to be!"

Molly made no comment; but, even in the starlight, her eyes showed that she was interested.

"When I was at the War—in France—I used to get billycans filled with food an' socks an' cigarettes. We all did! One day I got a note in one signed 'Cicely Irving.' Nice name 'Cicely'; took me fancy! Asked me to write to

her, an' I did! Got a bit loving in our correspondence; especially after me wound; an' we kept the letter writin' up till the War was over an' I come home again. Was a Sergeant, and had a medal on me chest! Didn't do anything much to get it, but the Colonel reckoned I was due for it and recommended me. When we arrived home she met me at the boat, and followed after us all in a car till we were dismissed."

He paused for an instant, and looked at Molly to see how she was taking the story. Satisfied, he continued:

"Called me her hero! Always used a capital H for that word, she did! Not a bad sort of a girl though! Thin, an' a bit weak perhaps! Didn't look too strong I mean! And she talked to me so much, an' she made such a fuss of me every time we met that I thought I was in love with her."

"Well! Maybe I was—in a way! But the thing that settled it was that she had plenty of money, and as I couldn't seem to get a job, I married her, and that's the dinkum truth! But what I now sez is this: 'Never marry money for a job!' It's no good! Cripes! I found that out after the first week. Couldn't buy a packet of fags without askin' her for the cash! No good! And the more she saw that she was the Boss, the more she bossed it!

"After about three months knockin' around I got something to do. Felt better. But the better I felt the worse she felt! Funny thing that!—come to think of it! She wasn't too well, as I told you; but when she was lordin' it over me she seemed as if there was nothin' the matter with her!

"When I got what I thought was permanent work, an' wouldn't stand her bossin' any longer, she wilted. Head sort'a fell over sideways, like a dyin' duck. Got worse an' worse. By and bye she said she hated me. Told me I'd never been her hero at all—used a very small h then—and said it was 'all a mistake!' 'Ought never to have married out of her station!' she said. Nice thing for me, wasn't it?

"Well! Time went on, an' things got worse between us. Seemed as if she was forever naggin' at me. And with it, she got so bad tempered—an' miserable—an' peevish—an' snively—if you know what I mean—that I just packed up an' cleared out!"

At this stage Molly moved as if she were about to get up from her seat.



"Wait a minute," he said, restraining her softly with his hand. "This is where I come to the point of the story! You see, I'd made up my mind to comb these hills for work. Things is gettin' pretty bad in Melbourne! Oh! And I forgot to tell you that I lost me place! Things got slack! So—as I said—I made up me mind to come into these hills an' look for a job!

"Now! Here's the funny thing! I was just at your gate—feelin' pretty tired—when I saw you turn the corner. Caught sight of your white apron. It seemed a bit home-like, an' I thought I'd come in an' ask if I could sleep on your verandah to-night. When I got up to your door I heard you cryin', so I tip-toed round to your window an' waited a bit.

"Then you started to pray, an' when you were through I nearly cried meself! I know all about your feelin's little woman. Had them meself a hundred times in France. Awful lonely out there at times, specially at night when you couldn't see or hear anybody. Dead silence, an' a cold wind. Pretty tough it was! But don't you worry! Some day the right man'll come along, never fear! It's a sure thing! Meantime the best thing to do is to get to bed. In the mornin' I'm going to talk to you about a job o' work. Don't start! Terms'll be easy—very easy! What's more, I'm sure you can do with a man like me around the place! S'pose I can sleep on the verandah till to-morrow can't I?"

"Yes!" replied Molly. And without another word she rose and went back to her room. But she had no sooner entered it than she laughed. A little hysterical laugh—just enough to relieve her pent-up feelings—and so remove the restraint she had put upon herself whilst listening to Jim Whyte's story. That she should have gone out to an absolute stranger—in the night—and behave as she did, still left her a little perplexed. Her action, she knew, was quite irrational, and altogether contrary to her ordinary ideas of what her conduct should have been had she taken time to think about it. She had acted on impulse. "And yet," so she told herself ere she slipped into bed, "I believe I would do it again! Anyhow, to-morrow will probably straighten things out, and I won't feel so funny about it!"

Next morning, although an early riser, Molly was not ahead of Jim Whyte. That worthy, on awakening, immediately made for the kitchen. There, as if to the manner born, he lighted the fire, put on the kettle and prepared to

make tea. A little later he had two cups ready. One of these he put on a plate, and stepping round to Molly's room gave a muffled knock on the door.

"Who's there?" she asked, waking up with a start.

"Just Jim!" answered Whyte, with a grin she couldn't see. "Would ya like a cup'a tea? I've got it all ready on a plate if you'd like to have it. Great thing a cup'a tea first thing in the morning. Wipes the cob-webs off yer eyes! Clears the brain! Gives y' a bonzer appetite fer brekfast—unless yer sick. Where'll I put it?"

"Open the door a little and put it on the floor! I'll get up in a minute and drink it!" she responded.

A little less than a quarter of an hour afterwards she, herself, entered the kitchen. Whyte was not there; neither was his swag on the verandah, as she took the trouble to ascertain. To her own surprise, she instantly experienced a sense of loss. In a moment, the utter loneliness of the previous evening swept over her again, and she felt as forsaken as ever. Yet surely, she thought, he could not have gone away without saying Good-bye!

But before she could think further the sudden sound of wood chopping fell upon her ears. A quiet smile suffused her face. There was no one else about the place who did that, and, of all the things she had to do, chopping wood was the worst. He was still at it twenty minutes later when she called: "Come and have your breakfast!"

As she watched him walking towards the house she was not exactly surprised at his appearance. That he was tall she knew, for last night, in the dark, he had stood beside her, and he appeared to be about six feet high. Yet he was not quite like what she had expected. He was broader in the shoulders, and thinner at the hips than she had imagined. Lean and muscular as a leopard, he looked; and he moved with the swift and easy stride of an athlete. But it was his clean shaven long bronzed face, his clear blue eyes, and his light brown hair which caught and held her attention. He was, she saw, a typical "Digger!"

No wonder Cicely called him "her hero," she thought. "I wonder what's the matter with her?"

Whilst he was eating his breakfast she said nothing. Neither did he. It was a waiting game. Each was stealthily studying the other, whilst she—at least—was hoping that

he would mention "the job of work" that last night he had said he would speak about in the morning. But he so steadfastly kept his peace that, to break the almost painful silence, she said:

"If you've anything to say to me you'll have to wait till three o'clock. I've beds to make, rooms to tidy up, and a dinner to cook—but, at three o'clock, I shall have half an hour to spare before I prepare to serve afternoon tea!"

All these remarks—although meant to draw Whyte into saying something about employment—really indicated Molly's desire to bring him to the point. This he was shrewd enough to understand; and as he was not prepared to speak until he thought the time propitious, he unexpectedly replied:

"Good! That'll suit me!" Whatever pleases you pleases me!" And, with a whimsical smile, he rose from his seat, and in three long strides was gone from the kitchen before she could utter another word.

A minute or two afterwards she saw him sweeping the side verandah, and with the right broom! After that he proceeded to rake and clean up the garden paths; picking out the weeds as he went and throwing them into an old bucket. Still later she saw that he had found a garden fork and spade. With the spade he was hard at work cutting the grass edges of the flower-beds, whilst with the fork he occasionally loosened the earth wherever he thought it necessary. Finally, he trimmed some of the smaller shrubs a little with his knife.

About eleven o'clock he put his head round the kitchen door and asked:

"Like the spuds peeled? I peeled millions in France and I'm a dandy at it!"

"Yes!" responded Molly. "It would be a help! Come in, find yourself a knife in the box on the dresser, and make a start!"

::            ::            ::

The offer to help in preparing the mid-day meal was a move on Jim's part that Molly had not foreseen. It changed the situation completely. Thus it was that, long before three o'clock, they had their talk; for, in addition to getting the potatoes ready, there were peas to shell, cabbage to cut and wash, and knives to be cleaned. In all these things

Jim behaved like an expert. Moreover, there was a humorous twist about the observations he made concerning them that kept a constant smile on Molly's face.

After a while—without warning—he suddenly asked: "D'y'a like kids? . . . Children I mean?"

"Yes! I do!"

"So do I! If there had been a young nipper in our house I think I could have stuck it out with the wife! Doctor said she couldn't have one. Seemed to make her sourer than ever. You've no idea the way she carried on. Sometimes I use'ter fancy she kept on tonguein' me in her sleep. . . . Awful thing, ill health! I don't wonder some sick people get ter nag nag naggin'. Eases their pain per'aps. I don't know. But when the blamed things goes on day after day an' week after week, it gets on y'r nerves. Believe me, nothin's worse than a naggin' woman; an' nothin's better than good health. . . . Yes! I'm sure a that! So don't let worry get ya down, or you'll get bad health y'rself—sure as Christmas!

"Say!" he went on, "last night I said I'd touch ya f'r a job'a work. Jobs is hard to get just now! That's why I'll make the terms easy, as I said. I don't want much money really; only enough to keep me in fags and a bob or two for clothes and other things I can't think of at the moment. If you'll gimme a dungaree suit, and ten bob a week an' tucker, I'll give it a go for a coupl'a months anyhow! Somehow I got a notion the wife'll find me. If she does I'll have to go back. But I'll make a start here an' now if you'll say the word. What about it?"

Molly scarcely knew what answer to make. The wages he had offered to take was less than a fair thing she knew. Yet, instinctively, she felt that the only chance she had of securing his services was on his own terms. Was he as hard up as he appeared to be, she wondered. How could his wife find him unless she had some inkling of the direction in which he had gone? Did she want to find him after what he said had occurred? It was all a puzzle. However, she took the risks, and James Whyte became her handy man.

Five weeks later, carrying water from the back to the front of the house, Jim suddenly stood still. The sound of a very familiar voice had reached his ears. It was by no means a pleasant voice, and its owner was probably the very last person he desired to meet. Pausing only long

enough to make certain there was no mistake, he very softly put the bucket of water down, and, as lightly and as silently as a cat, with long stepping strides, quickly made for his own room and shut the door!

After the lapse of about an hour Molly came to look for him—calling him by name. He was not surprised. Indeed, it was just what he had feared would happen. So it was that—although he heard the call—he was by no means willing to answer it. On the contrary, he would very much rather have pretended that he had gone down to the Township if such a ruse could have been successfully carried out. But he knew—only too well—that Molly would certainly come to look for him in his own room should he fail to appear. Very gingerly, therefore, he opened his door and peeped out. Seeing that she was alone, he beckoned to her, at the same time putting a finger on his lips as a sign to be silent. She looked at him in an amused fashion, but came towards him.

“Come in a minute!” he whispered, when she was close enough to hear him. “That was my wife I heard ya talkin’ to, an’ who, I suppose, you’ve agreed to take in as a payin’ guest. I don’t want her to see or hear me. An’ I don’t want to go back to her as I told you before. But she sounded pretty sick! Is she very ill do you think?”

“Don’t be a fool!” retorted Molly, stopping at his door. “How can she be your wife when her name’s Scott?”

“Yeh! I know! My real name’s Scott.”

“What? How can it be Scott as well as Whyte?”

“Oh. Dead simple. Full name’s James Whyte Scott! Didn’t wanta make it too easy f’r the Missus t’ find me! So just dropped the tail off me name—same’s a lizard does when he’s skeered an’ clears f’r his life!”

“But tell me: Is she very ill? If she is she might keep to her room a lot. That’s the only chance you’ve got to keep me here. If she saw me I couldn’t refuse to go back to her; an’ she’d want’a start ter morrer. It’s agen the law anyhow. What’s a man to do?”

“You’ve to stop here!” replied Molly, with all the firmness she could command. “How do you think I could get along without your help? I wouldn’t have agreed to take her in—a sick woman—and she’s coming to-morrow—if I hadn’t thought I’d have you to rely on. Of course she’s ill.

She's a very sick woman indeed. Collapsed on the bed when I showed her the room. It'll kill her if I send her away to-morrow. You've got to stay! If you go away now you'll be guilty of wife desertion, and that's against the law too. Don't you see that if you're helping me you're helping her as well? And just when she needs it most. You've got to stay I tell you!"

That settled it. Jim stayed. But the precautions he took, and the subterfuges to which he resorted in order to avoid meeting his wife, never failed to bring a gleam of merriment into Molly's eyes.

He tip-toed about as softly as a cat. He spoke in hoarse whispers—even though he were down at the front gate—a couple of hundred feet away. Further, he insisted on having his meals in his own room, and he would not enter the kitchen to clean the knives—or do any other odd jobs—unless the door was shut. Moreover, he so arranged his position that, should the door be suddenly opened, it would screen him from sight. And nothing that Molly could say made the slightest alteration in his procedure.

There came a day, however, when Molly was able to persuade Jim that he really ought to see his wife. That lady, believing she was very near to death, had taken Molly into her confidence. Her husband, she said, had left her through her own folly. He was the best of fellows, and she still loved him. By her tantrums she had really driven him away; and yet his leaving her had been a shock. She had never been very strong, and perhaps she ought not to have married at all. Now she was worse than ever! And putting her arms around Molly's neck, in hysterical weakness she sobbed: "I love him! I want him! Find him for me before I die and let me go happy!"

And, touched with womanly compassion, but without betraying her knowledge as to the whereabouts of the sick woman's husband, Molly promised to "find" him as quickly as possible.

When Jim came to the bedside of his wife she received him as quietly as if he had been expected. Molly's explanation passed unheeded. It was evident that her thoughts as well as her eyes were upon her husband. At that moment there was nothing and no one else in the world that mattered. For the time being she was happily content, and the ghost of a weary smile passed over her face.

As for Jim, his customary half humorous grin melted away at the sight of her grievously altered appearance. The greeting he had thought to give her was not spoken. He shifted uneasily on his feet and a genuine look of sorrow overspread his face. When he stooped to kiss her she said in a thin and wasted voice:

"I'm dying Jim! Take me home! I want to die in the house where we lived together!"

And then she fainted.

::            ::            ::

A few weeks after the last mentioned event Jim made up his mind to return to Ferny Creek. He was now a widower with ample means, for his late wife had bequeathed to him everything she had possessed. The value of the Estate was such that—did he so choose—he could live a life of ease in the City. But, as he very soon discovered, idleness became intolerable. To walk about and do nothing but smoke left him weary and dissatisfied. Almost insensibly he began to think of himself as "a loafer," and, to him, a loafer was one who deserved nothing but contempt.

These unusual thoughts disturbed him mentally and physically. They made him restless and unhappy. The result was a sudden determination "to get work again." Yet, when he came to consider where and what sort of work he would like to do, he found himself thinking about the place he had left in the Hills. And not that alone, for every time his mind reverted to the matter of employment, he always thought about Molly and her prayer. The remembrance made him wince. In a way that he had never before experienced—it hurt him to recall how he had allowed himself to overhear her most private thoughts and desires. And the more he thought about the matter the more clearly he realised that he "hadn't played the game!" That—in his Code of Ethics—was an unpardonable thing to do, and he upbraided himself for his offence.

"Jim! Ya scallywag! Y'took advantage of what y'heard t'screw the little woman into givin' y'a job! Wished y'rself on 'er y'did. Ought t' be ashamed of y'rself f'r doing it!"

And then a wave of compassion surged over him. Molly was probably as lonely as ever. Maybe she had not been able to get another handy man—and badly needed help. Well! It was up to him to see about it. The best thing

he could do would be to go and see how things stood. If she cared to have him back, he was ready! She could have some money too—if she wanted it.

But when Jim met Molly face to face he didn't dare to say anything about money! Instead, he instantly became his old self again, and, with a humorous twinkle in his eye, he said:

“I s-pose the job's still open?”

“Oh! Yes!” said Molly. “You can begin whenever you like. I'd rather hoped you come back, for I don't mind saying you're the best 'handy man' I ever had.”

“Is that so?” responded Jim, with his old quizzical smile. “I'm glad t' hear it! Best man you've ever had, eh? Well! You might get me for keeps if you treat me right!” And he laughed aloud as Molly blushed and turned away.

Six months afterwards they were quietly married.

On the wedding night, before retiring, Molly said to Jim:

“Don't you come to my room until I call you. Once I prayed, and you overheard me. I'm going to pray again; but this time I don't want anybody to hear me except God! Understand me?”

“Yeh!” answered Jim, and sat down to wait until he was called. But he did not wait for long. In the interval Molly had offered up her second prayer:

“Oh! God! Once I prayed to You when I was in trouble. I don't suppose I said the right things, and perhaps I didn't speak to You in a proper way. But You knew how I felt, and that I spoke true, and the very next minute You sent me the help I wanted. And now I've married him! But You know that, of course, and I'm so thankful and happy that I just wanted to let You know! And also,”—and here she lowered her voice to the softest whisper—“I wonder if I might dare to ask You for something more. Would You, could You send me—if I'm to have one at all—a little Jim who'll grow up and be as good a man as my big Jim; the best and kindest man in the world?”

::            ::            ::

About a year later, when Molly and Jim were discussing a name for the son who had arrived, he, pretending to be not altogether satisfied, said:



“Well! I s’pose ‘James’ has got t’ stand! If it was good enough for me I guess its good enough for the nipper. But what’s the ‘G’ stand for? James ‘G’ Scott! Is it for George or Godfrey or what?”

“Hush!” said Molly. “It’s for Godfrey without the ‘frey,’ and for Goodness without the ‘ness.’ I want Him to know that I’m so grateful and thankful for all that He has done for me, that I never want to forget it! And the best way to remind me will be through the boy; for every time I look at him, asleep or awake, I’ll think of God’s goodness to poor, undeserving me!”

At the christening, the Parson, looking at the slip of paper on which the name was written, asked:—

“What name does ‘G’ represent?”

“Oh! a very great Name,” answered Jim! “But we don’t want it spelled out or written down in any book!”

And the Clergyman—being a person of understanding—christened the child “James ‘G’ Scott!”

## Tales of the Dandenongs

---

### "GOOD-BYE! 'SUNSET'."

**T**HE boy stood stock still—and listened. He had just imitated a Lyre Bird's call, and appeared to be waiting for its echo, or a reply. Round about him there was a thick forest. The trees were so close together that—although it was only a little after mid-day—they partially excluded the rays of the sun. Under the branches of the giant gums it was not exactly dark, but the light was that of early evening. The peculiar quietude greatly added to the impression of approaching night.

Once more he perfectly imitated the Lyre Bird's call to his mate, and again he listened to the response. As the sound died away he said to himself:

"That's not a bird!" Neither is it an echo! I'm being mimicked by some one. I wonder who it is?"

And, with the natural curiosity of a boy of fourteen or thereabouts, he immediately set off to find out.

Up the mountain side he climbed as quickly as he dared. There was no beaten track to follow and he was forced to wind in and out among the trees to avoid making any noise which might disclose his coming to the person higher up. Once only did he pause and listen. Then, more softly than before, he repeated the Lyre Bird's call. The answer came at once. So, treading as warily as if he were approaching the Lyre Bird's haunts, he steadily continued in the direction from which the sound had come. As he drew nearer to the spot where he expected to see who had imitated his call he was even more cautious, probably hoping to surprise whoever might be there. He was so proud of his noiseless progress that he felt himself to be a regular sleuth of the bush.

Presently he emerged upon a narrow track up above the township of Warburton. And there, not six feet away, stood a girl a little younger than himself. He was as much astonished as she was surprised. But her confusion was

the greater, for his sudden emergence from the bush was wholly unexpected, whereas he had thought to see some other boy, or possibly a man. It never occurred to him that a girl would attempt mimicry. So it was that both were embarrassed and merely gazed at each other in silence.

The boy was the first to recover his poise and power of speech. In the circumstances that was only natural. He had expected to see somebody, whereas she had been wholly unprepared in that respect. Moreover, being quick-witted and observant, he had instantly noted the resplendent reddish golden tint of her uncovered hair. Being also of the free and friendly type—all boy, in short—his greeting was a cheery one:

“Hulloa! Sunset!” he said.

“Hulloa! . . . Boy!” she answered, a little less readily.

Then they both smiled and the way was paved for further remarks!

Before recording what the boy and girl said to each other it is necessary—for the purposes of the story—to say something about the track or road-way on which they met.

It is not a very wide track. Down its centre light steel rails are laid on roughly cut wooden bearers. The rails are about two feet apart, and, in between, the earth is hard and fairly smooth. Although the track is sometimes used by pedestrians, it is mainly utilised for the haulage of logs out of the bush to the timber-mill lower down. The logs are loaded on four-wheeled trollies drawn by horses. Up the sloping grades, and on the more level ground, the horses pull their heavy load after them. Going down hill stout strong brakes are applied, and the animals merely walk fast enough to avoid the nearest trolley bumping into their hind quarters. On returning with the unloaded trollies the process is much the same, except that the weight to be pulled by the horse-team is very much less. Either way, up or down, the sight is always a fascinating one for children. For adults, too, the sight is irresistible, and they always pause to watch the horses pass.

On the upper, or left hand side of the track the best of the timber has already been cut out. The country is therefore fairly open, and a good panoramic view can be obtained. It is for the sake of seeing this view that visitors occasionally walk up the track. But it has to be negotiated slowly, for the grade is pretty steep and fast walking is impossible.

On the lower, or right hand side, with but few breaks, there is a thick and almost impenetrable belt of forest that runs down to the very edge of the Creek in the valley. It is there, close to the running water, and amongst the ferns and thicker undergrowth, that the Lyre Birds live. They cannot thrive in the open, and being somewhat shy as well, they feed and mate and make their nests amid the deeper, darker recesses of the bush.

These facts are known to nature lovers, who properly seek to preserve the most wonderful of all the birds in the world. The boy, not less ardent than the most scientific of naturalists in his love of them, frequently came from the other side of the Creek to see them, and watch their play. It was most unusual for him to climb up to the trolly track, for he disliked it. To him it looked like an enormous and ever lengthening reptile, slowly eating its way into the very heart of the hills.

‘ ::            ::            ::

The introduction being over, so to speak, the boy continued:

“So you’re the bird that brought me up from the Creek! I wondered who was trying to repeat my calls! Now I know!”

And he laughed a joyous boyish laugh.

“Well!” she answered back. “You were calling for your mate, weren’t you? And I only replied because I was hoping to see a real live Lyre Bird—not you!” With which audacious statement she burst into a little peal of laughter that was like the silvery tinkle of the Creek away below.

“No! I wasn’t looking for a mate!” he retorted. “I was just imitating the Cock Bird’s call when I heard it repeated by what sounded like another male. That has never happened with me before, and I thought it queer. After listening two or three times I knew that I was being mimicked, and so I came up to find out who was doing it!” “But”—critically—“I think you might make a decent sort of mate if you know anything about Lyre Birds’ ways. I’m just mad about them myself. They can imitate anything, from a dog’s bark to the sound of a Timber Mill. There’s one down below that could make you believe it was a man playing a cornet. Honest! He really plays a tune! . . . Tell you what! If you like to come with me some day I’ll

show him to you. I know their feeding grounds too," and, lowering his voice to make the matter more impressive, "I can also show you the very places where they nest! Like to come and see them?"

"I'd love to go!" she replied. "But not to-day. Been out too long. Besides, I should have to ask Mother before I went. See her down the road there, sitting down?"

And she pointed to where a woman sat on a tree stump, just beside the track, about two hundred yards lower down.

"Yes! I can see her."

"Good! What's your name . . . Boy?"

"Kennion. Victor Kennion. I'll come a little earlier to-morrow. You do the same. If your Mother says you may, we'll go down at once to see the birds. This is the best time to see them, for they are just beginning to make their nests. If your Mother fixes another day you can tell me, and I'll let you know if I can come. You see—although my home is here—I'm only up on a sort of visit, and it won't be long before I'll have to go back to town. I'll tell you more when I see you again. . . . I hear your Mother calling you! Good-bye!"

And in a flash he was gone!

::            ::            ::

When "Sunset" reached her Mother's side she was filled to overflowing with her adventure. She was so eager to tell the story—and so anxious to obtain consent to see the Lyre Birds next day—that she was a little incoherent. Not once, but several times, she had to be asked questions in order to make matters clear. In particular, she was twice requested to repeat the proper name of the boy. In time, however, everything was understood; the permission she sought was given, and all was well.

Hours later—after her daughter "Sunset" had gone to bed—whatever the thoughts were that had entered Mrs. Westering's mind, she was still much disturbed. Indeed, so restless did she become that—possibly in the hope of getting rid of her mental perturbation, or of tiring herself out—she left the house, and, in the glorious light of the full moon, went for a walk. Her pace was slow and her head was bent as, possibly by chance, or maybe under a direction of which she was not conscious, she went back over that

portion of the track which she and her daughter had come down in the afternoon.

By a coincidence, or possibly under the same unknown direction, John Victor Kennion—"Boy's" Father—also resolved upon a walk, just a little later. In his case, however, the reason for going up the track was for the purpose of inspecting it. As the Proprietor of the Timber Mill and certain forest rights he was interested to see that the trolley track was all in order. With a night almost as bright as day this was easy. And so it was that—with his head bowed as he slowly mounted the rise, he, too, seemed to be in deep thought.

They met at the stump, where—as in the afternoon—Mrs. Westering had seated herself—a little tired. She rose as the man approached, and silently waited for him to pass. At the sight of his face, however, a change occurred in her demeanour. She knew him at once—and before he had time to recognise her—for her face was somewhat in shadow under a hood she was wearing,—she was surprised into speech.

"So! John!" she said, in an agitated voice, "it was your boy I saw upon this hillside to-day! The son of the woman with whom you ran away after we had actually fixed the day on which we were to have been married! Somehow I suspected it. The name was too uncommon not to recall the bitter past. But I did not expect to see you to-night, and I certainly do not know what prompted me to speak to you after the dreadful way in which you treated me. It was cruel. It was vile!"

The man was staggered. For a moment he stared like one who is temporarily dazed. But quickly recovering himself he hoarsely said:—

"Good God! Elaine! Is it you? I had hoped never to meet you again, for I know that I behaved like a cur. Your scorn and contempt I deserve—and more! I shall not, therefore, offer any excuse for my conduct. It was too bad. But you are entitled to know the facts—cold and bitter as they are—and I shall tell you the truth. . . . The woman I married—my wife to-day—fascinated and enthralled me. I did not love her. I do not love her now. But there was a physical attraction about her that I could not then resist. It swept me off my feet. Under its spell I was indiscreet and committed myself. She led me to believe a certain thing had happened. It turned out to be incorrect. She

had lied to me, but I was deceived, and married her under compulsion; a sense of duty."

He paused. But as Mrs. Westering said nothing, he went on again, but less excitedly.

"It is all past and over now. We live together—peaceably enough. Besides, she has given me a boy who is all in all to me. To him I give all the affection that I have to give. He is my life. For him I gave up my Accountancy Business in the City and bought the Timber Mill at the foot of this hill. It is for him I live!"

Again he paused, but only for a moment. Changing his tone, and speaking almost wistfully, he said:

"Victor met a girl to-day. A girl whose hair, he said, was like sunset gold. That used to be the color of yours. It was wonderful; a beautiful burnished bronze with a golden sheen. I could wish," he softly added, "that she was a daughter of yours, for he speaks of her with delight—boy as he is!"

"It was my child he met!" replied Mrs. Westering, abruptly breaking her silence. "And she is the daughter of the man who, in sheer self defence, your desertion forced me to marry. I am his widow, and like you, my child is my life. She is more to me than anything else in the world. Without her I think I should die!"

"I tell you these things because I cannot keep them back. Your confidence has altered my thoughts and plans. My long nurtured resolves have somehow been swept away from me. I had intended to curse you if ever we met again; to pray God in your presence that you and your wife might pass your lives in bitterness and strife! To wish you misery unspeakable. But now—now I shall do no such thing. You have already suffered, and I would not have you suffer more. I understand the reason for your desertion . . . now!

To-morrow I have promised my girlie that she may go with your boy to see the Lyre Birds. And . . . and foolish woman . . . that I am, I should like to talk to this son of yours . . . when I can summon up the strength to meet him. Go now! . . . Do not speak to me any more, for I can bear no more!"

And there was in the tones of her voice something so final that John Victor Kennion turned about, and, striding

away, did not see the tears which, by a supreme effort, she had been able to hold back until he had gone!

::            ::            ::

The next day was a red letter one for "Sunset!" She was to meet "Boy."

As soon as possible after his mid-day meal Victor was at the spot where they had met upon the previous afternoon. She, quite as eager as he, came up a minute or two later. He was no sooner out of the bush than he saw her coming up the track. She had just left her Mother, who was seated upon the same tree stump that she had rested upon the day before whilst waiting her daughter's return.

There were no preliminaries. All he said was:

"It's a bit dark in the bush, but you won't mind that will you? Not afraid are you?"

She shook her head.

"And you'll have to keep very quiet when I tell you we're getting near to where the Lyre Birds are. They're easily frightened, and they might run away if we made a noise. Besides, you're a stranger, and they get to know people."

She nodded her head, and off into the bush they moved.

In a little while they reached their goal, and, luckily, he was able to show her all that he had promised she should see. Not only so, but he explained to her many interesting things about the birds and their ways. And she was filled with wonder at all he knew; especially since he said that he had found out everything for himself; mainly by watching them for hours at a time. It puzzled her greatly to understand how anyone could be so patient, but she did not say so, for she had a feeling that it might not seem quite polite.

When they had had enough of the Lyre Birds they sat down beside the running creek for a little while. In the cool shade of the trees it was very pleasant listening to the water as it bickered in and out among the pebbles and tumbled over rocky little falls; and for a few minutes they were silently content. Then he gave her a pleasant surprise, for, proceeding to a nearby tree, he produced from behind it a parcel which, on being opened, she saw contained two



battered scones, two apples, and a cup without a handle. The food they shared, and, from the little stream, he brought her a deliciously cool drink of water in the handleless cup.

After they had eaten he became confidential. He told her that he didn't like the Timber Business, and although his Father was the owner of the Mill, where the logs were sawn into planks and other things, he was not going to be a saw-miller. He had left a private school two years ago, and was now at the Scotch College; a boarder when School was open. At present the boys were all on holidays, and he would soon have to go back. But, someday, he was going to the University to train for a Lawyer or a Doctor. He didn't know which—yet!

Here he stopped to ask:

"But what about you? You haven't told me a single thing about yourself. I don't even know your name!"

"To-morrow," she replied. "We must go now, for Mother will be waiting for me. She told me not to be long, and I'm afraid I've stayed too long already. I'm sure it's getting late—so please let us go now!"

On the morrow the programme was repeated. Yet it was not exactly the same, for, in place of buttered scones, he had brought two pieces of cake. She, not to be outdone in hospitality, produced two sticks of milk chocolate. The "picnic" part of the afternoon was all the merrier in consequence. And when they had eaten their fare "Sunset" said, perhaps remembering her promise:

"My Mother knows your Father. That's why I'm allowed to go with you to see the Lyre Birds. Mother would like to come too, but she's not very strong. She has been very ill and has to rest a lot. Some day, when she's better, she might come. She told me to say that, to-morrow, she would like you to come and be introduced. I said I could bring you to-day. But she shook her head, and while we were talking about you—I thought it a funny thing to say—she said: "No! I don't think I could stand seeing him to-day. Bring him to-morrow; I think I shall be stronger then."

"Will you come . . . Boy?" before we go down to the Creek?"

"Of course I will," he answered. And so the matter was settled.

::            ::            ::

Next day, when "Sunset" and her Mother arrived at the place where Mrs. Westering was accustomed to sit, Victor was waiting for them.

"This is Mother!" said "Sunset" simply.

But when Victor gave Mrs. Westering his hand she held it, and over her lovely blue eyes—just like her daughter's—there seemed to come a mist.

"I'm very glad to meet you Victor!" she said, and her voice trembled a little. "You're a nice strong boy, and"—more to herself—"handsome too. You should grow into a fine man someday—if you're spared. I'm pleased too that you like my little girl—and that she likes you—for I knew your Father very well—once! But" (and the words she added seemed inconsequential to Victor) "he married someone else and I lost sight of him for years! . . . Now be off; and build your castles in the air. It's a delightful occupation. I built one for myself once; but a strong wind came and blew it down!"

And with a gentle little push and a sweet smile she sent them on their way.

Whilst Mrs. Westering had been speaking, a set of unloaded timber trollies, drawn by four powerful horses, had gone up the hill. They were on their way back for another load of logs. When they were almost within reach of the top Victor and "Sunset" stepped upon the track, it being their intention to follow after and enter the bush about the usual place. Had they chosen to do so, they could have cut across the cleared space opposite to where they had been talking to Mrs. Westering and saved some time in getting to their destination. But, as such a thought did not occur to Victor, who knew this, they simply made for the point at which they had entered the bush on the two previous occasions.

Less than a minute later a loud crack arrested their attention and caused them to look ahead. The next instant they saw that the end trolley, having broken its coupling, had started running back. They immediately realised the danger that threatened them, and did not need Mrs. Westering's warning cry to stir them into action. On to the flat,

cleared space upon the farther side of the track they ran, and, fascinated by the sight of the runaway trolley, stood watching it gather speed.

The next moment the noise of the rapidly rolling trolley was so great, and their interest so keen, that they did not hear Mrs. Westering's second call. In mortal fear she shouted to them to run away as fast as they could. "Run for the bush!" she called, and herself made for safety on the higher ground upon her side of the track. There she stood, almost paralysed with fear, waving to them to be off; but they neither saw nor heard. And they were too interested to move of their own accord.

On the trolley came; rattling, rolling, swaying; but still noisily keeping to the rails. The sight was fearsome to behold.

When it was about thirty feet above the place where the young ones were standing a strange thing happened. As if he suddenly realised that the monstrous thing was about to leap from the track, Victor flung his arms around "Sunset" and bore her to the ground, his body protecting her from any possible mishap. There was no time to do more, for—the next instant—the very thing he seemed to have feared had actually come about. With a volleying kind of spring the trolley left the rails, turned sideways a little, and, with a terrific force, struck him on the upper part of his arm a little below the shoulder. The impact was such as to lift and fling him ahead of the truck which—in its final plunge—fell cornerwise across his legs and back. A flying stone—dislodged by the trolley as it fell—dropped heavily on "Sunset's" chest.

::        ::        ::

After examination, the Doctor found that Victor's arm, his back, and both legs were broken. There were internal injuries as well. It was impossible that he could live. All that could be done was to kill the pain and let him pass away as easily and as peaceably as circumstances would permit.

To the medical man the astonishing thing was that he had not succumbed at once. His broken and bruised condition was truly terrifying, and the agonies he had suffered must have been almost beyond human endurance. Yet, as soon as he could speak, his first questions were about the girl it had been his desire to protect from harm! Had he

saved her? Was she alright? Could she come to see him soon?

The next morning, being a little rested but very much weaker, he asked to see "Sunset"! She was waiting the opportunity—alone! Her Mother was far too upset and ill to accompany her; but, with unerring intuition, knew what he would wish, and had so arranged.

When "Sunset" softly entered the room and stood beside his bed she could say nothing. She was too overcome by grief—and the sense of tragedy—to do more than look at him in silent sorrow. But into his eyes there came a clear glad light, and in a low but strangely vibrant voice he said:—

"I—saved you—didn't I—'Sunset'?"

"Yes! 'Boy,' you did. And last night I asked God to make you well and strong again. I . . ."

But she had to stop as a choking sob came up and two great tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Please—don't—cry!" he pleaded in words that came so brokenly. "I'm going—to die—I know! It's—no good—to live—now! I'm too—smashed—up! I can't—even—move! Ask—God—to-night—to lift me—into Heaven! I'll be—quite—well—when you—come—there!"

And, with a last wan smile upon his face he just managed to say: "Good-bye!" . . . "Sunset"! and closed his eyes forever.

::            ::            ::

Forty-two years later a sweet faced lady, who might have been married but had chosen to remain a spinster, lay dying of cancer in the chest. The malady was attributed to a blow she had received when a child, and it had so ravaged her system that for some time she had been confined to her bed. Amongst her lovely silver hair—as soft as spun silk—there were still a few odd strands of that wondrous sunset hue which once had acted as a magnet to all admiring eyes.

The end was near and she knew it. Yet neither anxiety nor fear showed upon her face. On the contrary, she was as calm as if she slept. Those who came to see her marvelled at her fortitude no less than the continuing

graciousness of her manner. To her companion and the nurse, as ever, she was still more concerned about their comfort than her own.

One day—after the performance of some small service, she said to them:

“How kind you are! Yet I wish I were not so much bother to you both! However, I shall soon be gone, and, when that happens, I shall be no more trouble to anybody!”

A moment later she added:

“Please do not think me childish or foolish; but every time I wake now I have the feeling that I have been talking to some one I have not met for quite a long time. And the strange thing about it is that—when we talk—we both seem to be very pleased to see each other. But, stranger still, although I cannot remember who it is to whom I speak, I always wake feeling certain that we are going to talk again. So it is that—in a way that I do not understand—I am filled with a kind of promised happiness, and I feel I want to go!”

As always, death came with appalling swiftness.

But before its icy hand could still her heart she suddenly sat upright, and, with a look of glad surprise and wonder in her eyes, softly murmured: “Hulloa! . . . Boy!”

Those there are would say that, at the last, a dormant cell of memory was unaccountably opened, and that she thought she saw her childhood's friend. It may be so! But, amongst those who believe in Heaven and an immortal spirit, who is there can doubt that she actually saw and spoke to “Boy” again? Or, for his part, who would deny that “quite well,” as he said he would be when she arrived, “Boy” was ready to put his arms about her, and—even as he had asked for himself—lift her tenderly into the Paradise where pain is not, and health and happiness are for evermore assured!

# Tales of the Dandenongs

---

## “PIN” MONEY

**O**NE of the most ancient buildings in Melbourne is the “Mitre Tavern.” It stands in Bank Place, just off Collins Street, and its appearance is quite in keeping with its age and architecture. Moreover, the semi-secluded spot upon which it is set adds to its old-world character; especially when contrasted with the modern buildings by which it is overshadowed. So much so, that—with its high-pitched roof and gable end—anyone not knowing the facts might easily imagine that it had been lifted bodily from some old English village and transported to its present site.

Nor is the aged nature of “The Mitre” confined to its external features. Inside—as well as outside—it is reminiscent of the Old World rather than the new; a fact that is wholly in accord with its history. Within its walls—“in the early days”—many a convivial gathering was held; many “a glorious night” was spent, and many a friendship sealed and settled for life over “a bottle of the best.” And—if walls could speak or windows tell of what they have witnessed—one might hear repeated a witty remark, or a gracious after-dinner speech; both well worthy of the repetition.

Further, there is no reason to fear a stint of such entertainment. On the contrary, the old House is saturated with the sayings of the business man and “merchants of standing” in the City in the days of long ago. Lawyers also—brilliant and otherwise—were wont “to wet their whistles”—and match their stories one against another—at the bar of the old “Mitre.” So it is that—if the past could be recalled in the way suggested—it would be possible to hear the sharp riposte of a rising young Barrister to the cutting sneer of his older rival; listen to the tale of an amazingly clever piece of legal work in connection with a famous Life Assurance case, or laugh at the recital of the learned Judge’s jesting comments on the statements of the co-respondent in a certain divorce case which—in the early nineties—stirred “society” to its centre.

Yes! The Mitre Tavern might "many a tale unfold" if it could only speak. Yet—dumb as it is—no stranger can wander in for a meal without sensing a feeling of welcome or receiving an impression of its storied experiences. On enquiry for the Dining Room he will be directed to the foot of a narrow stairway and instructed to "go to the top." About half way up the stairs, on a small landing, he will be smilingly greeted by the Licensee, who, according to custom, sits there ready to receive the price of the repast as the diner descends, and to bid him a cheery "good-bye!"

When the stranger reaches the room—with its vaulted wooden ceiling—he will see a number of small tables covered with white cloths. Nearly all the seats at these tables are reserved for habitués, and to take the chair of any one of these is a first-class misdemeanour. Each has his own place—just as if he were at home. In consequence the visitor must be content to sit where one of the busy waitresses directs. But that will be the only sign of inequality in membership—so to speak. In all other respects—from the moment he sits down until he leaves—he will be treated in the same homely fashion—and given the same homely fare as the others, for these are the abiding characteristics of "The Mitre."

Between forty-five and fifty years ago much the same state of affairs existed. Neither the Licensee nor the attendants are the same, of course, nor are many of the diners of those days now to be seen. But two things are as good as ever: the beer and the victuals. And because this is the case, some of the juniors of the time mentioned still patronise the establishment at which it was considered an honour to drink and dine in those faraway days. Amongst the number are some old Lawyers who—in more senses than one—had just been "admitted to the Bar." And, if any one of these "old identities" were reminiscent he would certainly tell of a well-known Solicitor of the period: "the brilliant but erratic "Pin" Money."

This man—somewhat senior to themselves—may, for that reason, have impressed himself upon their minds; but, in addition, he was the possessor of a personality that would have excited attention anywhere. Physically, he was of a good height—almost six feet—well proportioned, dark haired, clean shaven, and, except for a slightly Jewish nose, might have been accounted a really handsome man. But his principal attractions were, courteous manners, a delightful voice and a charming style of speech. Indeed, the last

named should have been mentioned first, for it was such a rare blend of well chosen words—coupled with old fashioned touches in phrasing—that it never failed to create a feeling of friendliness and intimacy between himself and those who heard him—whether client or casual listener.

Now the full and proper name of the Lawyer just described was Peter Pinsent Money. How and why he came to be called “Pin” will presently be narrated. In the meantime it has to be said that the word “erratic”—so frequently used when speaking of him—was really a euphemism for “unreliable,” and, as applied, was intended as a warning to the unwary. Its use arose out of the fact that—despite his admitted brilliance and legal ability—he was really a smooth tongued jovial scamp, only tolerated for his geniality, his wit, and an apparently inexhaustible fund of good stores—many of them told against himself.

By his legal brethren, Money was never spoken of except as “Pin” Money. The name “Pin” was not used by them—as a diminutive usually is—out of liking or love. No, “Pin” Money really constituted a phrase which, amongst themselves, had a significance, and bore a meaning, entirely different from the one the thrifty house-wife knows. In short, it was really descriptive of a failing of his, so well known that, at first, it became a common source of comment, and, finally, an appellation.

The truth is that “Pin” was a foreshortened term for “Pinch”; and as those familiar with current slang will know, “to pinch” a thing is to take it without leave. By the orthodox in thought such a proceeding is bluntly called “stealing,” but to those possessed of a more pliable conscience the offence is not so seriously regarded. Among the latter Solicitor Money must certainly be classed, for, from what is known of his earlier history and methods, he was a man who could draw for himself a comforting distinction between the verbs “to steal” and “to pinch.” Even so—although all he took without leave consisted of various sums from his clients’ cash—he was always careful to enter the amounts in his books as “personal loans.”

::            ::            ::

The “personal loans” to Money were quite unknown to the Lenders. Only once in a while—not having the wherewithal to satisfy a Client seeking a settlement in full—the matter would have to be mentioned. Then it was



that Money rose to the full height of his powers. With an engaging frankness that was his best asset—and with a persuasiveness of speech that was well-nigh irresistible—he would explain that financial difficulties had forced him to borrow a portion of his Client's funds:—

“Just temporarily, my dear Jenkins! And only because I felt positively certain that you would yourself have been the first to offer it had I mentioned the matter. Naturally”—he would add—“if you insist upon receiving interest on the amount you have lent me, I shall pay it with pleasure! But, speaking as one gentleman to another, the loan is so small, and the interest so very little, that I feel sure you will not demean yourself by making this a business transaction. No, my dear fellow, we are friends, and you are treating me as you know I would treat you in similar circumstances!”

And, quite often, the flattered, if puzzled, Client, would let that end the matter!

Occasionally, however, there would be one who was not as easily bluffed, or set aside. But that only nerved Money to a better effort. Adopting the tone of one who was wounded to the heart—but who was sorry for the man to whom he must speak so plainly—he would thus address his victim:—

“My dear Sir, you are wholly right—of course! The money you demand is yours. Yes, yours! But please do not forget that, in demanding its repayment, you are dealing a death blow to our friendship! That this demand will embarrass me—temporarily—only temporarily I assure you—may not influence you in the least. . . . Yes! That is my affair! . . . But I am not without other friends—many of them. To one of these I shall go for the trifle with which you no longer choose to accommodate me. . . . And I shall get it. Never fear Sir, I shall get it! And within a few days—maybe to-morrow—I will send you my cheque. Yes Sir! For the full amount! . . . And now Sir, I must bid you a sorrowful farewell! . . . If you really require the money, then I shall be glad to have paid it to you in your time of need! . . . But if not, then I sincerely hope that you will suffer no anxiety of mind at having severed a friendship which, I fondly thought, might last for many years to come! Good-bye!”

And, with a gentlemanly courtesy that was not to be resisted, he would usher his visitor to the door of his office,

open it in the grand manner, and bowing low would once more bid him: "Good-bye!"

When this kind of thing occurred—and Money felt compelled to pay for fear of exposure—he sometimes made his promise good by taking an additional "loan" from another Client. But there were other times when such an easy method was not possible. The "treasury" was empty. Perforce, therefore, he was obliged to raise the required amount by applying to all and sundry for "a little temporary accommodation" to overcome the situation. And it has to be recorded that—up to the time when no appeal and no device could aid him further—he invariably succeeded, and, in so doing, avoided the one thing he really dreaded: a legal action for recovery.

As a consequence, Money had a long run before finding himself in the predicament indicated. It befell him some time after the collapse of the "Land Boom" in 1890/91. For several years prior to that disastrous event everybody in Melbourne enjoyed a certain measure of prosperity. Work of all kinds was plentiful—particularly in the building trades—wages were good, and money—or what passed for money—circulated with a freedom almost equal to the great gold-digging days. The future seemed to be secure, and many thousands of people sought to acquire a home, or a block of land on which a house could later on be built. Yet these honest and praiseworthy efforts but gave an impetus to the "Boom," for—strange as it may now appear—the way in which pieces of land were sold over and over again—and at ever increasing prices, turned the heads of even the most sober-minded in the community, and "speculation"—in the hope of quickly acquiring riches, became a sort of disease. Old and young were smitten with it, and the end was misery unspeakable. But that is another story, and not even this reference need have been made to it had not the end of the folly—and the downfall of Peter Pinsent Money being closely related.

As to the manner of his fall—and the way it came about—a little preliminary explanation is necessary. In order that the buyer of a piece of land may obtain a title to it, the seller signs what is known as a Transfer Form. This Transfer, properly executed and witnessed, is usually lodged at the Titles Office by the buyer's Solicitor. Sometime later, if in order, a "Certificate of Title" is issued in the name of the new owner. The Solicitor receives the

Title, notes it, and in due course hands it to the owner of the land, or retains it for safe-keeping as directed.

Throughout "the boom" the transfers of land were remarkably numerous, and Solicitors flourished on the work they did in that connection. Amongst others, Money was one who shared in the affluence of the period; but inasmuch as he always lived a little beyond his earnings, he was one of the first to feel the swift cessation of this lucrative business. And—when things generally went from bad to worse—and all manner of interests were adversely affected—his plight may be easily understood. Pressure was put upon him from all quarters at the same time. With the exercise of his old skill in speech, and his marvellous manners, a good many claimants were beguiled by specious promises of one sort or another. But there was one man who—having lost his employment—would not be so set aside. He resolutely demanded the Title to a block of land he had agreed to purchase, or the immediate return of the cash he had left with Money to pay for it. Neither were forthcoming, and a Court action was speedily launched.

::        ::        ::

The aggrieved man was an Englishman. His case—put into order from the way in which he told it to the Lawyer who acted for him—is best told in his own words:

"Mah name is Withers—'Enry Withers! Ah coom fr'm Bermin'am t' Melbourne eight year ago: me an' mah family! Bah trade ahm a die sinker, and, tho ah say it mahsen, ahm a good un too! Ourn is a fam'ly wi' a bit of art abaht it! Mah brother Tom painted a picture of a Cat and Kitten, f'r the Cat and Kitten Pub, as Joe Chamberlain sed were real good! And our Joe know'd a thing or two 'e did! Yes! And ah know mah job—as Mister Leverson, of Little Bourke Street—oo brought me aht—knows reel well!.. 'E were sorry t' part wi' me 'e were; but trade 'as got real bad, and ah 'ad t' go! Yes! Ah worked f'r 'im f'r well over seven year!... Paid me good wages too, 'e did—f'r I done 'is best jobs; seals, crests, medals, and h'all sorts of things beside!

"Well! Whilst wi' 'im ah saved a tidy bit of cash! Put it in the Savin's Bank ah did! But, about a year ago, the Misses and me thought we'd like t' buy a block of land, and, later, build an 'ouse on it. So we went to a Land Agent at Brunswick oo 'ad some blocks f'r sale that we rather fancied. They were in Mitchell Street—and not much of a step fr'm

Sydney Road. We picked on one. Ah paid 'im a deposit on it. 'E then gev me wat 'e called 'a contract of sale'—w'ich ah signed—and 'e told me t' take it t' Mister Peter Pinsent Money in Chancery Lane!

“This Mister Money—the Agent sed—were the Solicitor t' the h'estate, and ahd 'ave t' pay 'im the rest of the purchase price, and 'ed get me a title t' the land! So—one dinner 'ower—h'up ah goes t' see 'im! 'E werent in 'is office; but a smart youngster ses:

“‘Ahm sorry Mister! But you'll find 'im at the Mitre f'r sure! Or—if y' like t' wait 'ere—ah'll go and fetch 'im!’

“No! Ah ses. ‘Ah think ah'd like a glass a beer mahsen—f'r ah swallered mah lunch a bit 'astily! So don't you bother mah laad; ah'll go and seek 'im h'out!’ That ah did, and we 'ad two afore we were done—both of w'ich 'e paid f'r like a gentleman! Then 'e walks me back to 'is office, 'to' talk business'—as 'e put it!

“Now, this 'ere block of w'ich ah speak, was t' cost me a 'undered and eighty pound, deposit of ten included. That was in the Contract! But Mister Money—oo 'olds mah money and won't pay it back—'e says—as perlite 'as h'ever you 'eard:

“‘W'y, Mister Withers, the price you are t' pay is h'outrageous—positively h'outrageous. If Ah may say so,' ses 'e, ‘You could well afford t' forfeit your deposit and buy an adjoinin' block from me! You see,' 'e goes h'on, ‘Ah bought a block at the first sale! Now—bein' in want of a little cash—Ah'm ready t' take a small profit and let you 'ave it f'r a 'undered and forty! And,' 'E adds: ‘seein' that the land belongs t' me, Ah won't charge you h'anything f'r obtainin' the Title!’

“Now that seemed fair enough—didn't it? So I ses: ‘W'ere might this block be, and 'ow can it be found?’”

“‘Oh that,' 'e answers back, ‘is easily settled. Ah'll show you the plan—same as you 'ave yourself. 'Ere it is! Your block's number is 38, mine is 35—a little nearer the Sydney Road. There you are, see!’

“And—sure enough—there it were!... Then 'e ses: ‘As f'r the Title, ahve got it 'ere in the safe! Ah'll show it you!’

“And, in abaht arf a minit, 'e opens the safe door—pulls out a thick sheet a paper—summat the size of your blottin' pad—and shows me the red drawin' of a block of land on it—with the number 35 in the middle of it! But—just as Ah was a-reachin' out me 'and t' take it, 'e quickly ses:

“ ‘Of course y' know—Mister Withers—that **this** Title is no good t'you. It 'as first t' be put into your name. As a matter of fact,' 'e ses, “no Title is h'any good unless it comes from the Titles Office. It will be mah dooty t' get you a Title in your own name!”

“Well Sir! That got me! So ah said to 'im:

“ ‘Wot you say seems t' be alright. As far as I can see, this is 'ow it works h'out! Ah get as good a block a land has the t'other one. Ah save thirty pound on the price, and Ah get the Title f'r nothink! Is that right?' 'E nods 'is 'ead and Ah say: ‘Good! Now wot do Ah 'ave t' do t' fix it?’

“ ‘W'ere's y'r money? 'E asks.’

“ ‘In the Savin's Bank!' Ah reply.

“ ‘Good! Very good!' ses 'e. ‘Get the 'undered and forty from the bank as soon as y' can; bring it t' me ere, at this 'ower, the day you draw it, and Ah'll have the proper papers h'all in h'order!’

“With that 'e h'asks f'r mah full name, h'occupation and h'address. Ah give it 'im, an' w'en Ah got the money from the bank h'up Ah goes to 'is office. This time 'e were in! And the minnit Ah puts mah nose inside, h'up 'e gets, sticks out 'is 'and like a old friend, shakes mine 'eartily and ses:

“ ‘Ah! Mister Withers! Very glad t' see you!... Got the money I suppose?’

“Yes! Ah replies. 'Ere it is! And Ah puts the paper bag that 'eld the cash down on the table.

“ ‘Ah! Good! Very good!’ 'e chuckles. ‘Now this is the Transfer Form. If you will kindly sign there'—pointin' to a place on the big blue sheet—‘that is all that is required of you!’

“Ah signed! Then 'e counts out the money; puts it in 'is safe; locks the door, and asks me t' come and 'ave one at the Mitre!

“ ‘Wait a minnit!’ Ah ses! ‘Don’t be in a ’urry! Ah want t’ ask you a question: ‘ ’Ow long does this transfer business take? In h’other words, w’en do Ah get mah Title?’

“ ‘Well!’ ses ’e, slowly—strokin’ ’is nose, ‘the numbers goin’ through just now are pretty large. It may take two or three months—or even longer. It all depends on ’ow busy they are at the Titles Office! . . . . But Ah suppose that doesn’t much matter t’ you—fer you’re not yet ready t’ build are you?’

“ ‘No! Not yet!’ Ah ses. . . . . But there’s another thing: Don’t Ah get a receipt f’r mah money?’

‘Oh! Mah dear Mister Withers,’ ’e ses wi’ a smile—‘a receipt between Solicitor and Client is quite unnecessary! One gentleman to another you know!’

“ ‘No! Ah don’t know!’ Ah tells ’im, pretty blunt-like. ‘An’ Ah don’t pose as no gentleman mahsen! Ah’m a craftsman, I am, and Ah want a receipt fer mah money! And wot’s more, Ah’m a’ goin’ t’ ’ave it!’

“ ‘Oh! Very well!’ ’E laughs. ‘As you do not choose t’ treat me as a gentleman—but merely as a business man—you shall have a receipt!’

“And, Mister Solicitor, Ah got it! ’Ere it is! And that’s the end o mah story, except that, after waitin’ fer abaht a year, and tryin’ h’over and h’over again t’ get mah Title or mah money back, Ahm sick a Mister “Pinch” Money, and Ah want you t’ take ’im t’ Court and ’ave the matter settled one way or t’other!”

::            ::            ::

The Court proceedings were unusually short. As presented, the case for the Plaintiff would have been unanswerable, and a verdict against Money was certain. But, quite unexpectedly, he chose to admit his fault, and to explain that the Title he had shown Withers was one that he had just received for another client. He further stated that his “error” was made in consequence of “the dire necessity to meet certain payments which, otherwise, he could not have met.”

Nevertheless, his statements did not impress the Court, and judgment was given against him for the full amount, with costs. And that was all that Withers got; for the

publicity given to the case resulted in a flood of other actions of a like kind. One after another they were decided in favor of the Plaintiffs. Indeed, Money's conduct was considered so bad that he barely escaped being sent to gaol. His name was struck off the Roll of Legal Practitioners, and, insolvent, the once debonnaire and dashing Lawyer found himself without means or a profession.

Another misfortune was the loss of his wife. Married young, and happily, she was his idol. In turn, she regarded him as being almost a superman, and, together with her daughter and grand-daughter—spent her life and love in serving them. Of her husband's business affairs she knew absolutely nothing. The disclosure of how he had been behaving, and of his embarrassments, was therefore so wholly unexpected that—not being physically strong—she suddenly collapsed and died.

In colloquial phraseology, "the blow hit Money where he stood." It was to keep her in easy circumstances—and free from worry—that he first began "to borrow" without leave. Now, in bitter remorse, he realised that it had all been a grievous mistake, and his wretchedness was such that he, too, almost succumbed to his distress.

Whilst the Court actions lasted—and they were carried over several months—the economic situation in Victoria grew steadily worse. Business of all kinds was affected. Many hundreds of unemployed men left for Western Australia, where, almost daily, gold was being discovered. The legal profession—even if Money could have gone back to it—was suffering with the rest of the community, and the outlook for him could scarcely have been worse. But, fortunately, his son-in-law, George Davidson, came to his rescue. This he was able to do because of his prevision. He had been a builder and contractor; but—at a comparatively early stage—saw that house building was doomed, and so "cleaned up" his engagements as quickly as possible; sold his other interests and put most of the proceeds into an apple orchard at Upper Beaconsfield. There he was bravely struggling to make a decent living for himself, his wife, and their little daughter, Beryl, when Peter Pinsent Money lost his last case.

At a much earlier stage Davidson sensed the disgrace into which his father-in-law must fall. He also foresaw that the old man would be friendless and destitute. So—without waiting for his wife to broach the subject—he sug-

gested that—when it became necessary—they should ask him to come and stay with them. Nothing could have been more satisfactory to Mrs. Davidson, or more pleasing to little Beryl. The child loved her grandfather with a love that knew no bounds, and it was a great joy to her when he came to “stay for good.”

And so the years rolled steadily away. Times changed. Production increased. Prosperity returned. Work and wages improved. Optimism superseded pessimism. A broader outlook was everywhere in evidence. The people had turned their thoughts towards a United Australia. Before the Nineteenth Century closed they were asked to approve of the Act of Union. They did, and, with the dawn of a new Century, a new Nation was constituted.

At Upper Beaconsfield, as elsewhere, these things made a perceptible impression upon the little community settled there. Both individually and collectively there was an advance. But on no one was the change so marked as on Peter Pinsent Money. Within the tolerant atmosphere by which he was surrounded, and amid a cheery helpfulness that the improving situation inspired, he, too, acquired much of his old jauntiness of spirit. The hope of reward—material or spiritual—was the mainspring of his life. Optimism was a diet upon which he thrived. The esteem of his fellow men was also food for his soul. He gloried in approval, and so it was that—even amongst those who could not measure up to him in any way—he spared no efforts to secure their esteem.

Initially he had learned how to prune and bud; to hoe and spray, and to pick and pack fruit with the best of those who did such work. These contacts enabled him to display a knowledge of other things—social and political. As a consequence—although by slow degrees—it became the custom to consult him upon all manner of subjects—from the purchase of an extra area of land to the making of a will. On the last named matter his legal training was invaluable, whilst his acuteness of intellect served him well in dealing with many an involved or unfamiliar situation.

In conversation, and as a public speaker, Money was easily first amongst the local residents. They loved to hear him descant on matters of current interest, and more especially on those relating to the latest political moves. At their little gatherings he was usually voted to the chair, and his decisions upon procedure were never disputed. To inter-



jectors, his retorts were generally so apt or so crushing that they were delightfully repeated throughout the District during the next few days. Amongst other things, a line he added to an old saying was frequently quoted with gusto by his apple grower friends:

An apple a day keeps the Doctor away!

“And two drives the Chemist insolvent!”

In short, Money became so esteemed that he was eventually asked to offer himself as a Candidate for Parliament. That was a very great compliment; the highest that a Citizen in those days could expect to be paid. None the less—though very much flattered by the invitation—he kindly but firmly declined to accept it. He was, he said, too old to fill such a responsible position, and he suggested that they should look for a younger and more energetic man.

But—unrecognised by himself—there were other influences that contributed to his decision. His outlook and ambitions were changed. He was not exactly the old-time ambitious young lawyer. There was a subtle difference—easily observable by his daughter and son-in-law—though not apparent to strangers. In part, this difference was due to the gruelling lesson of his earlier failure—now heavily scored upon his mind. It was also attributable to the fact that—by unconscious absorption—he had acquired something of the sturdy moral fibre of those amongst whom he now lived. Taken together, these things had given him a firmer grip upon himself. His viewpoint was broader. He did not so readily yield to his own desires, and he was much more considerate of the feelings of other people.

One other factor connected with his refusal to seek Parliamentary honours can be more easily understood. In a way that is frequently to be noted among Grand-parents, his daughter's child had become the delight of his life. As she grew into a clever and pretty young girl his affection for her increased, and, in reason, it was a comfort and a joy to please her in every possible way.

After she had left the local State School, he personally undertook her further instruction—spending a portion of the allowance Davidson made him on books of various kinds. In addition, he gave much more attention to her manners and deportment than did her parents, and he constantly encouraged her in the soft and gentle graces of femininity; a quiet voice, modulated speech, and an unassuming gracious-

ness. The result was not unexpected. She became Queen amongst her intimates, and in his eyes, "the sweetest little lady in the land."

Under her Mother's tuition, she soon became an adept in the housewife's arts. Quite often, however, after her household work was done, she spent part of her leisure in drawing, at which she exhibited some skill. Later on—again encouraged by her Grand-father—she tried her hand at Water-Colours. Truth to tell, there was nothing remarkable about them; but, as it chanced, her attempt to picture one of the glorious views that can be seen at Upper Beaconsfield led to wholly unforeseen developments.

::            ::            ::

One Saturday afternoon—on the road to Emerald—Beryl Davidson was seeking very hard to capture a particularly lovely scene. Busy with her paint brushes, she did not observe the approach of one who came and stood behind her, watching her efforts. Had she done so she would have seen a tallish young man of fine physical proportions. In striking contrast to her own fair hair and blue eyes, his were both dark brown. She would also have noted that he bore himself with ease, and that there was an air of alert intelligence in his glance that was its own recommendation.

When at last he spoke, his voice was pleasing and his manner of speech ingratiating. Yet he so surprised Beryl that she started, blushed, and was a little confused. But his easy style soon set her at ease, and, in a very few minutes she was deeply interested in his remarks. He began by referring to her work:

"You are using Water Colours, I see! They are very suitable for the open country you have chosen to depict. Were the timber thicker, and more delineation required, oils might be better. But," he added with a smile, "that is a matter of opinion, and I may be biassed, for I am myself extremely fond of water colours and sometimes try my hand at a picture in that medium. . . . Do you mind if I also try to get this view?"

"Oh! Not at all!" said Beryl. "Put up your stand—which I see you have with you—and we can be company for each other!"

Thereupon both set to work, and nothing more was said for perhaps an hour. Then, a little tired, Beryl stood up and moved to where she could clearly see the stranger's work. To her it seemed so excellent that, involuntarily, she remarked:—

“I like your work much better than my own. Are you an Artist?”

With a merry laugh he replied:—

“If I could honestly say I was I should be proud indeed! . . . No! Not yet! . . . But I am studying hard under an accomplished Master, and someday, I hope to do something worthy of that title! . . . And now I would like to ask you a question: ‘Who is your Teacher?’”

“Oh! I have no one to teach me!” Beryl quickly answered. My Grand-father urged me to try water colours because I draw pretty well and have a fair sense of colours! He thinks I have artistic talent!” She laughed prettily as she added: “What do you think?”

But he quickly parried the question by saying:

“I prefer not to answer just now. If I might meet you again—you live hereabouts I suppose?—I could give you a better opinion after having seen your finished picture. . . . Are you free to meet me at this same spot next Saturday afternoon—or is that too soon?”

Without the slightest hesitation, but not with any show of eagerness, Beryl said that the following Saturday afternoon would suit her very well. And so began an acquaintanceship that rapidly ripened into something more. Yet, despite the happiness she experienced in the company of her new found friend, Beryl held her secret. Actuated by a feeling that was not quite clear to herself, she neither mentioned the first nor any subsequent meetings; although they went on regularly for several weeks. But, during those weeks friendship turned to love on both sides, and then it was that, in a sudden burst of confidence, she told her adored Grand-father the whole story. Later, on his advice, she told her parents how matters stood.

But the shock to Money—on first hearing that her lover's name was Withers—was very severe. Instantly he thought of Henry Withers, and—in the twinkling of an eye—all the bitter memories of years before went seething through his brain. He tried to convince himself that the

similarity in names was a mere coincidence, yet, over and over again, in a wearying round, he wondered if there could possibly be any connection between the two men.

A week later, on meeting young Withers, Money thought he saw a distinct resemblance to the die sinker he had known. Careful questioning proved his fears to be well grounded, and the knowledge gave him many an anxious hour. He became so silent, and so abstracted, that Beryl rallied him about "growing old and solemn!" It was the best thing she could have done. More acutely than ever he realised that he must prepare himself for the emergency that was sure to arise. From what Herbert Withers had said—and Beryl agreed—there would be no long engagement. Whenever the marriage took place Herbert's father and mother were bound to be present. He—Money—could not be absent. Yet the moment Withers senior saw him there was bound to be a scene; perhaps a tragic one. That must be avoided at all costs. The future happiness of his Grand-child was at stake. He must act; something must be done.

With these thoughts to urge him on, Money finally determined on a definite plan of procedure. He would go and see Henry Withers, and, in advance, make sure that no unworthy episode should mar the wedding day. So—after nearly twenty years—he suddenly announced his intention to go to the City "on a little matter of business." The news so astonished the family that he hastened to add:

"There is an old debt of honour that I feel I must now meet! . . . Only a small one my dears—only a little one; but one that I must settle at once or it may be too late!"

"Can I help you in any way?" asked his son-in-law. Do you want any money?"

"No! George! No thank you! So far as money is concerned I have saved quite enough—out of the allowance you have made me—to cover all that I want to do! Many thanks all the same!"

That ended the matter. If Grandpa wanted to visit Melbourne there was no valid reason to object. Hence it was that, on the following Saturday morning, he set out for the City. That day of the week was chosen because he had learned from Herbert that his father "always pottered about the garden on a Saturday afternoon." The full address had been previously obtained and noted.

On arriving at the home of Henry Withers—in Elsternwick—the door was opened by his wife. In characteristic style, Money quickly asked her to “kindly let Mr. Withers know that a gentleman is waiting to see him on important business.”

This statement so impressed Mrs. Withers that she immediately invited him to “come inside and take a seat in the front room whilst I go and call father from the garden!”

A minute or two later Withers entered, wonderingly. But the moment he saw Money he stopped dead and exclaimed: “You ’ere—Mister ‘Pinch’ Money!—And in mah ’ouse, too! Ah suppose y’ know wot’s a comin’ to’ ya: the ‘idin’ of y’r life. Put up y’r ’ands!”

But, just as Withers was about to move forward, Money smartly took him up:

“No! My dear Withers. I will not put up my hands—although I am even prepared to take a hiding for the sake of your son—as well as for my own sins!”

“Mah—own—son?” queried Withers. “Wot d’ye mean?”

“Yes! Your own son. But please let me explain in my own way! . . . . I want to speak to you as one gentleman to another. I . . . .”

“Na! Na! enuff o’ that!” interjected Withers. “Speak like a man—if y’ can!”

“Yes! Withers! I can, and I will! . . . . When I took a hundred and forty pounds from you, years ago, I honestly intended to pay you back, sooner or later. But your Court action put a pack of hounds on my track. I was set upon by everyone to whom I owed anything, and, at the end, I was struck off the Rolls, and left without a shilling in the world. . . . Then my wife died—brokenhearted—and I was in despair!”

“And serve y’ damn well right Ah think!”

“Yes! Withers! It did serve me right. And I was so ashamed of myself, and so down and out, that I might have committed suicide had not my son-in-law offered me a home and something to do! He also made me a small monetary allowance!

“Wot! Are y’ goin’ t’ pay me back?”

"Yes! In a way! But do please hear me out! The place my son-in-law gave me was as a kind of assistant in his apple orchard at Upper Beaconsfield. I came from there to-day, especially to see you! I'm...."

"A apple orchard? That's queer!" interjected Withers. "Mah son 'Erbert 'as a friend up there as keeps one o' them orchards. D'ya 'appen t' know 'im? . . . Davidson's the name! 'As a daughter on oom our 'Erberts pretty sweet!"

"Yes! Withers! I know him well! It was about him and his daughter that I have come to see you! And if I may speak as one gent'—I mean as one man to another—she is one of the finest girls in Victoria!"

"So our 'Erbert says!.... But then they h'all say that.... Ah said it abaht Mah Missis afore Ah married 'er!.... A run away match ourn were!.... 'Ad t' steal 'er fr'm 'er father oo didn't like me!.... But go h'on wi' y'r story—and let me know w'ere Ah come in! H'other-wise Ah may lose mah temper, and ye'll get a beatin' w'ether or no! It's pretty 'ard t' keep mah hands h'off ya as it is. Ahm gettin' impatient wi' h'all y'r talk!"

"Please calm yourself Withers!" pleaded Money. "You come in as the father of the young man who is going to marry my grand-daughter!"

"No! By God! 'E aint!" shouted Withers, passionately. "Ah'll see you and y'r blasted grand-daughter in 'ell first! .... A thievin' robbin' blackguard!....that's wot you are. And I won't let mah son marry inta your fam'ly, not f'r nothink on h'earth!"

"Now; Now! Withers!" Cooly retorted Money. "You forget having told me about your wife—and the trouble you had with her father. You forget that you ran away with her—'stole her' was the phrase you used! . . . Is it not possible that your son might do the same as you did—if opposed? . . . Come, let us be friends, and help them both!"

Withers stood dumb — irresolute — and Money continued:

"I believe I could persuade Beryl not to marry Herbert; but because he loves her—and she loves him—I want them both to be as happy as you appear to have been in your married life—and as I was in mine! . . . Although I could

now pay you back your money I do not propose to do so; but I will give my Beryl to your Herbert instead. . . . And believe me, Withers, she is worth more than all I ever owed—much less your little debt! . . . Come, let us shake hands!”

And Money made a step forward with that intention. But Withers—although manifestly moved—doggedly broke out afresh:

“Damn y’r eyes Money! Y’r at y’r old tricks agen—talkin’ a man out of his proper senses! Get out! Get out I say! or I’ll . . . .”

But Money did not move. On the contrary, he calmly looked Withers in the face and said:

“My dear Withers, do please be reasonable! We are both too old—and too sensible I hope—to fight like a pair of school boys! . . . . Besides, what earthly good will it do you to bruise my features or knock me down—supposing you could? . . . . I should be hurt, and you would be upset. Worse still, each of us would be disgraced in the eyes of our families. . . . No! No! Withers! Fisticuffs are the weapons of the brutal and the ignorant! . . . We are neither in the one class nor the other. On the contrary, we are sober-minded men, and can settle our differences without recourse to blows! In short, we can forget the past for the sake of the future—and the welfare of our children!”

These observations, persuasively spoken, visibly affected Withers, and, noting this, Money softly proceeded:

“Let me put the position to you as I see it! . . . . Herbert is your only Son—your only child! . . . . In a way—Beryl is my only child! . . . . I never had a son—and—with me, the bad name dies out! Let it die! unwept, unhonoured, and unsung! That is of no consequence, for my personal ambitions are all dead. But—if you bear the love for Herbert that I have for Beryl—and that they have for each other—let their love live, even though we BOTH die!”

Money paused. The other man remained silent—seemingly still unable to make up his mind. But Money had not studied human nature in vain.

“What say you, Withers?” he quietly queried.

The question was like a galvanic shock. With a flash of his old energy Withers answered:

“Wot Ah say is: ‘You win!’ . . . . ‘Mother!’” he shouted,  
“bring us some tea! . . . . Ah want y’ t’ meet the Grand-  
father of our ‘Erbert’s sweet-’eart!”

::            ::            ::

Three months later—looking through her wedding presents on the day of the ceremony—Beryl found an envelope containing a cheque for £140. Attached to the cheque was a little note which read:

“From Grandpa to Beryl for ‘Pin’ Money.”



**SPECIAL NOTE.**

The paper used in the production of this book was manufactured in Tasmania from Australian wood-pulp. It is known as “Australian M.F.” paper.



Horticultural Press Pty. Ltd.,  
78a Victoria Street, Melbourne.