

Strong-minded Miss Methuen.

By E. W. HORNUNG.



WHEN Canon Methuen was offered the least tempting of Australian bishoprics, strong hopes of a refusal were entertained by admirers of that robust and popular divine.

His chances of a much more desirable preferment, if he would but wait for it, were, on the one hand, considerable; and on the other hand was his daughter Evelyn. Miss Methuen, an only unmarried child, was not the one to suffer transportation to the bush, while she *was* the one—the very one—to influence her father's decision. So said those who knew her, showing, as usual, how little they did know her. For whatsoever was novel, romantic-sounding, or unattractive to her friends, most mightily attracted Evelyn Methuen; and the Australian bishopric possessed all these merits. Her friends were right about the girl's influence in general with their beloved Canon; they did not over-rate the weight of her say in this particular matter; but beyond this their fond calculations proved sadly adrift. Evelyn never even paused to consider the thing, say in the light of transportation and live burial; she jumped at it; and on this occasion she did not jump back. Her father, who knew her, gave her time for the customary rebound. But this time she knew her mind, and on the fifth day the world learnt that the offer of this Colonial bishopric (of which it had never heard before) had been definitely accepted by the Reverend Canon Methuen.

Miss Methuen had done it, and apparently she knew no regrets. That repentance at leisure of which her father had disquieting visions, founded on past experience of her, did indeed become conspicuous, but only in a delightful manner. She was not, of course, without a proper sorrow at departure: the spires at sunset made her pensive; she duly cried when the wench came, but performed that wench strong-mindedly, notwithstand-

ing. This was her accredited characteristic, strength of mind. It enabled her to tear herself away from a grand old town for which she had an unaffected veneration—where she spent most of her life, where her mother lay buried, where two sisters lived married: from some precious Extension Lectures, in the middle of the Browning Course: from her own little room, made pretty with her own hands, at small cost, with fans and Aspinal and photographs in frames: from those very young men who were foolish about her at this time; and almost as easily, six weeks later, from the more mature and less impossible admirers of the outward voyage. But—though, to be sure, she had never had absolute occasion for a refusal of marriage—she would have refused Lord Shields himself—the fellow-passenger—on the voyage out. Her heart was set upon the wilderness, and on that Bishop's Lodge there, her future home. And the only men for her now were the gallant bushrangers of some stories she made a point of reading before landing—their kind, at least, which of course must still infest the wilderness.

Before reading these romances—that is, until the prospect came of living in Australia—Miss Methuen's ideas of that continent had been very vague, very elementary, and rather funny. Her timely reading gave shape and background to her ideas, but left them funnier than ever; at all events, it did not prepare her for the place she was going to; it did not pretend to do so, that romantic literature; only Miss Methuen had chosen to assume that all Australian scenery would be in the same style. She was prepared, in short, for gullies, gum-trees, caves, ranges, kangaroos, opossums, claims, creeks, snakes in the grass, and chivalrous robbers on the high-road; but she was not prepared for a dead level of sandy desert, broken only by the river-timbers of a narrow, sluggish stream,



"CALL THIS THE BUSH?"

nor for a wooden township, where the worst weapons of man were strong drink in the head and strong language on the tongue ; and this was what she found. Great was the disillusion, and in every respect ; it discounted and discoloured all things, even to the Bishop's Lodge, which—with its complete margin of creeper-covered verandah—was charming in everything but situation.

"Call this the bush!—where are the trees?" she said rather petulantly to her father ; and, as she looked at his long dust-coat of light-coloured silk, duck trousers, and pith helmet, she might have added : "Call you a Bishop!—where are your gaiters?"

In fact, Miss Methuen's contentment wore away, very nearly, with the novelty. The Bishop saved the situation by taking her with him on his first episcopal round up country. He wore, too, on that round, his gaiters (with a new chum's stout shooting-boots underneath) and black garments, for the cool weather was coming on. They had a delightful cruise among the sheep-stations of the diocese (a little district the size of England), their pilot being the

Bishop's Chaplain, who, as it happened, was a son of the soil. They gave the hospitality of the squatter a splendid trial, and found that celebrated Colonial quality rated not at all too high. The Bishop held services in the queerest places, and administered holy rites to the most picturesque ruffians, winning in all quarters the respect and admiration of men not prone to respect or to admire, for his broad shoulders and grizzled beard and his erect six feet, as well as for the humanity and virility of every sentence in his simple, telling addresses. Evelyn, perhaps, was admired less ; but she did not suspect this, and she enjoyed herself vastly. There were gentlemanly young overseers at nearly all the stations. These young men, naturally taken with the healthy colour and good looks of the English girl, were sufficiently attentive, and

seemed duly impressed by her conversation. So they were ; but clever Evelyn was not clever in her topics ; she talked Browning to them, and culture, and the "isms" ; and they mimicked her afterwards—the attentive young men. But this she did not suspect either. She returned from the cruise in the highest spirits, her preconceptions of the bush not realised, indeed, but forgotten ; and after weeks among the stations the wooden town seemed a different and a better place, and the Bishop's Lodge a paradise of ease and beauty.

But during the less eventful period of the Bishop's ministry at head-quarters, the delight on his daughter's part tapered, as her delights invariably did in the absence of variety. She began systematically to miss things "after old England ;" and here the Bishop could sympathise, though the forced expression of his sympathy galled his contented and tolerant nature. He pointed out that comparison was scarcely fair, and hinted that it lay with Evelyn, as with himself, at once to enjoy and to improve the new environment. But of course there were matters for regret, occasions for a sigh.

The service of the sanctuary was necessarily less sumptuous here than in the old English minster; and Evelyn had a soul of souls for high mass, and the exaltation of the spirit through the senses. Then when the service was over, there were no young curates of culture to step in to Sunday supper or dinner, as the case might be. This was a want of another kind; it is not suggested that it was the greater want. The social gap, certainly, was an unattractive feature of Bishop's Lodge, where even the young overseers, who talked with a twang and had barely heard of Browning—never of William Morris—where even those unlettered savages had been royally welcomed visitors. As it was, the only visitors, almost, were the Chaplain and his wife, who did not count, as they practically lived at the Lodge. Nor was either of this excellent couple to Evelyn's taste. The Chaplain, indeed, was but a bushman with a clean mouth; clerical, to the eye, in his clothes only. No one could have accused him of polish—nor yet, let us state, of laziness or insincerity. Evelyn, however, tilted her nose at him. As for the Chaplain's wife, she was just one of those kind, unpretentious women who are more apt to be spoken of as "bodies." She did many things for Evelyn; but she had also many children, and spoilt the lot; so that Evelyn could do nothing but despise her. For, in her reputed strong mind, Miss Methuen nursed a catholic contempt for human weaknesses of every shade.

When, however, the time came for further episcopal visitations, Evelyn, who accompanied her father as before, once more enjoyed herself keenly. Her enjoyment was certainly enhanced by the fact that the ground traversed was not the old ground. But this turned out to be her last treat of the kind for some time to come. The next round of travels was arranged with the express object of Confirmation, and the Bishop seemed to feel that on this occasion the companionship of his daughter might be out of place. He decided, at all events, to take no one but the Chaplain. So Evelyn was left behind with the Chaplain's wife, and neither lady had a very delightful time. The girl spent most of hers in writing exhaustive letters to her friends, prolix with feminine minutiae, but pathetically barren of the adventures which she longed to recount, if not to experience. In particular she corresponded with some old friends in Sydney, at whose

fashionable residence she had spent a night before accompanying her father up-country. These people sympathised with her on many sheets of expensive note-paper. The letters became mutually gushing; and long before the Bishop's return, Evelyn had arranged to spend the term of his next absence with her opulent friends in Sydney.

When he did return, Evelyn, as it happened, was not in the house. In point of fact, she was reading under the gum-trees by the sluggish little river, but, as usual, the Chaplain's wife was not in the unnecessary secret of her whereabouts. Evelyn's book on this occasion had itself a strong odour of the gum-trees, for it chanced to be the Poems of the bush poet, Lindsay Gordon. Now Evelyn, having attended University Extension Lectures on the subject of "Modern Poetry," was of course herself an authority on that subject; equally of course she found much to criticise in these bush ballads. What, however, not even Miss Methuen could find fault with, was their local colour. She had seen it herself up the country; she only wished she had seen more of it—more of Gordon's bush and Gordon's bushmen. Oddly enough, though, in his book, the verses that attracted her most were never written by Gordon at all:—

"Booted, and bearded, and burnt to a brick,
I loaf along the street;
I watch the ladies tripping by,
And I bless their dainty feet."

She liked these lines well enough to learn them, and it was impossible to avoid glancing at her own dainty feet in doing so. Why did *she* never encounter the booted bushman who had seen better days?

"I watch them here and there,
With a bitter feeling of pain;
Ah! what wouldn't I give to feel
A lady's hand again!"

"Ah!" echoed Evelyn, looking at her own small hand, "and what wouldn't I give—to pull some poor fellow to the surface with *you*!"

And indeed she was ready to give much, having some soul for the romantic, and being bored.

Looking up from her book, she was startled to see her father hurrying towards her, his fine face beaming with gladness. Evelyn beamed too, and they embraced in the road, very prettily. The Bishop explained his early arrival; the last stages he, even he, had driven furiously—to get back to his darling girl. Then he thrust



"SHE WAS STARTLED TO SEE HER FATHER."

his strong, kind arm through hers, and led her home. But as they neared the Lodge his steps hesitated.

"My dear, I have a confession to make to you."

"A confession! Have you done something naughty, father?"

"Yes! I have taken pity on an undeserving young man. You know, Evelyn, this colony is full of educated young men who have gone hard down hill until reaching the bottom here in the bush. I have come across I can't tell you how many instances up country, men from our Universities and public schools, living from year's end to year's end in lonely huts, mere boundary-riders and whim-drivers."

"Contemptible creatures!" exclaimed Miss Evelyn, with virtuous vigour. "I have no sympathy with them, not an atom!"

Though Gordon was still under her arm, the bushman who had seen better days had vanished quite out of her head, which contained, as we know, a strong mind, and was perhaps rather swollen by conscious strength.

The Bishop was not pleased.

"Come, come, Evelyn! I do not like to hear my dear girl settle questions in that way—questions of humanity, too. It was not our blessed Lord's way, Evelyn, my darling! However, the young man I speak of has done nothing to merit anyone's contempt—nothing, nothing," averred the Bishop, with disingenuous emphasis. "He is merely a young fellow who came out to the Colonies and—and has not as yet done as well as he hoped to do. And I found I had been at school with his father!"

"Where is he now?" asked Evelyn, divining that he was not far off.

"Here in the house," confessed the Bishop. "He goes on in the coach—it leaves in an hour, at seven; and, Evelyn, my dear, I'd rather you didn't see him before he went. He is going down to Sydney to get himself some decent clothes, and I have also asked him to have his beard shaved off, as he is quite a young man. The fact is, he will be back here in a fortnight, and you will see him then; for he is coming back as my

Lay Reader!"

They covered some yards in silence. Then Evelyn casually inquired the young man's name, and her father told her that it was Follet; Christian name Samuel, after the Bishop's old schoolfellow. As they approached the house, the Bishop persuaded his daughter to efface herself until the coach had gone; it was not fair, he said, to meet the young man as he was, when in a few days he would come back a different being. It would have been inevitable, such a meeting, had Evelyn been in when they arrived; but now that it was so easily avoidable, would she not have the strength of mind to avoid it? He knew she must feel very inquisitive. So she did; but she loved, above most things, an appeal to her strength of mind. She promised. To see, however, was not to meet. And strong-minded Evelyn contrived to see—through a window of the room in which the future reader was waiting—herself unseen in the gathering shades.

She could not see much: a slim young man sitting over the fire; a bronzed face,

illuminated by the flames with flickering patches of orange; thick black hair; a thin black beard; moleskins, leggings,

(for this prelate smoked like any shearer) to kiss good-night to his daughter, and when Evelyn said, really meaning it at the moment, that she would do all *she* could for the permanent reformation of poor Mr. Follet—certainly it did not seem to the Bishop, just then, that he had made an injudicious arrangement.

Within the fortnight Follet duly reappeared—a quietly-dressed, clean-shaven, earnest young man. And within the week after that he found it impossible to sail under false colours with one so honest and high-souled, so frank and strong-minded as Miss Methuen. He told her his story—and the worst part of it, which the Bishop had not told her—in a sudden burst of mingled shame and thankfulness, and in a chance five minutes in the starlit verandah. His curse had been drink! Yet Miss Methuen heard this revolting confession without being visibly revolted—even without that contemptuous curl which came too easily to her lips.

"Forgive me," he murmured, "forgive me for telling you! I couldn't help it! I *can't* go on pretending

to have been what I have not been—not to *you*, who are so honest, and frank, and strong!"

"How do you know I am strong?" asked the girl, colouring with pleasure; for he had fingered the mainspring of her vanity.

"I see it."

"Oh, but I am not."

"You are! you are!" he exclaimed, contradicting her almost as vehemently as she desired. "And now you can never think the same of me again—though you will not show it!"

"You are wrong," whispered Evelyn, in her softest tone. "I will think all the more of you—for having climbed out of that pit! You are going on climbing now: only think how much nobler it will be to have climbed from the bottom of the horrible pit, than had you started from the level land, and never fallen!"

And, indeed, the sentiment itself was not



"A BRONZED FACE ILLUMINED BY THE FLAMES."

Crimean shirt, and a felt wideawake on the floor between his feet. This was absolutely all that Evelyn saw. But it was enough. The contempt she felt or affected for weak humanity did not trouble her just then. Miss Methuen forgot it. Miss Methuen, for one rare moment, forgot herself. She saw before her the burnt and bearded bushman who had known better days. And the sight was good in her eyes.

In a fortnight he would be back there as Lay Reader!

How a Bishop, who was also a man of the world, came to make so injudicious an arrangement, only Bishop Methuen could explain. The chances are that in contemplation of the evils from which it was to be his blessed privilege to rescue this young man, he lost sight of others of a less shocking description. Certainly that night, when he removed his pipe from his teeth

free from nobility. As she uttered it she gave him her hand, frankly and cordially. Then she left him alone in the starlight, inspired to do and to dare glorious things, and burning to scale the glittering heights of divine enterprise—always sup-

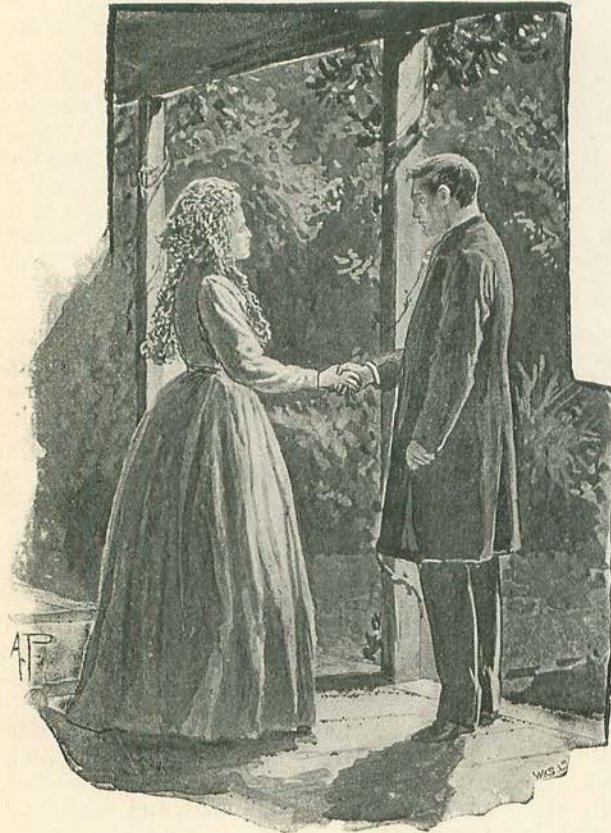
properly and definitely asked in marriage, the incomparable Miss Methuen.

Then Bishop Methuen made the force of his character unpleasantly apparent.

For so gentle and godly a man, he showed a truly amazing capacity for anger—and anger of a very downright, usual, and Britannic description. Angry, however, as he was with the culprits, he was still more angry with himself; and—what was *not* usual, but the very reverse—this made him blame the culprits less and himself more. Putting the pair on parole, he promised to give the matter fair consideration, and he did so in portentous privacy. Then emerging, like the jury, after a mercifully "short delay," he gave what was really, on the whole, a most merciful verdict. Evelyn was to go down to Sydney, and stay with her fine friends there as many months as they would have her—six, if possible. There were to be no letters, no direct communication of any kind. But, if they were both of the same mind when Evelyn came back—and always supposing Follet was as zealous and earnest a worker then as now—then the Bishop would consider the whole matter afresh. They need not look for an unconditional consent even then. The very promise of reconsideration was essentially conditional.

So Miss Methuen went down to Sydney a month before Christmas; and the Bishop, in his human inconsistency, granted her

a long interview with Follet on the eve of her departure. Nor did Dr. Methuen's goodness end then or there: he was ridiculously good to Follet from that time forth. The very next day he made the young man fetch his trunks from the Chaplain's house, where hitherto he had lodged, and keep bed and board henceforward at the Lodge. Both were free; and it was the Bishop, of course, who had paid for those trunks and their contents, not as a present (so he said), but as an advance of salary. He would have had us remember that the young fellow was his old schoolfellow's son. The young fellow, however, had amiable characteristics of his own. More than this, he was of real use to the Bishop, being, in spite of his



"SHE GAVE HIM HER HAND, FRANKLY AND CORDIALLY."

ported by the strong soul of Evelyn Methuen.

The obvious sequel of that starry night took place just two months later—it was surely very creditable to both parties that it did not take place much sooner. At length, however, on a similar night of stars, only in the warmer air of November, Miss Methuen found herself in the angle of Follet's arm—heard him whisper to the sweet end what others, mere boys, had but timidly and tentatively begun in the old days at home—found her head lying back upon his shoulder—and breathed, scarcely knowing it, an answer which deserved a finer deliberation than she had given it. You see, it was the first time she had been

sins, more to the manner born than the honest (but indigenuous) Chaplain. A strong mutual affection came into being between the old man and the young one, and daily increased—an attachment apart from gratitude. Follet's gratitude was a thing by itself, something never expressed in words nor by any conscious look or act. Unconsciously he expressed it every day. And these bonds were supplemented by one still stronger—that is, on Follet's side: the impalpable bond of Evelyn. They seldom spoke of her; never in any but the most casual connection. But Follet loved to think of the good old man as Evelyn's father. The Bishop, on the contrary, hated to think of Follet as her lover. He knew Evelyn better than Evelyn knew herself.

The girl's letters naturally were mentioned when they arrived, though they never, of course, contained a message. The nearest the pair came to joining hands over Evelyn was, however, in the matter of a letter from her. It came when the Bishop was busy; it begged him to send her a certain book of poems, and when nobody could find the book, the Bishop said, rather testily: "Write, like a good fellow, and tell her it isn't in the house. And you may as well say we're all right, but too busy—well, that we're busy." The Bishop remembered what he was doing; yet he presently added, "Stay! If there's anything to interest her, say it; it will save me a letter; and really I am *very* busy!" Nor was the inconsistency merely human this time; the Bishop was curious to see what notice would be taken of Follet's letter. Would her next be nominally to Follet direct, in answer, or would

she thank him in a message? There was justifiable occasion for the former course: but Evelyn did not seize the occasion: she took no notice at all! Then the Bishop became vastly uneasy, and wished with all his heart that he did not know his daughter so well.

This was not until the fifth month of Evelyn's absence, and her friends in Sydney had been only too delighted to take her for the six; but long before that time had elapsed the Bishop was upset by a telegram announcing that she was already on her way home. No reason, no explanatory hint was given. He who knew her so well was prepared for anything. It was a two days' journey, she could not arrive before the evening following the receipt of her telegram. In his perplexity the Bishop took the news straight to Sam Follet.

That young man was now reading earnestly for Orders. He had, indeed, been intended for the Church from early years; but he was a clergyman's son; he had disappointed, and been sent to the colonies—to the dogs, in other words—for it is so with



"IN AN INSTANT FOLLET WAS ON HIS LEGS."

those who are sent out to be got rid of. But now Bishop Methuen was in communication with his rejoicing old schoolfellow, and the boy was to be ordained after all. The Bishop found him busy reading in his bedroom. This was the first time he had intruded on him there. Follet was seated at a little table touching the wall; from a peg high over the table depended a surprising collection of old garments, crowned by a grey felt wide-awake. They interested the Bishop in spite of his errand; he was glad, besides, to curve round to the point; so, as Follet turned round in his chair, he greeted him extempore:—

"What in the name of fortune are those things over your head, my dear boy?"

Follet blushed a little, tilted his chair backward, eyed the queer garments, and rather timorously answered:

"They're my old bush togs, sir. I keep them there to—to remind me—that is, so that I shan't forget——"

He stuck. The Bishop hastily changed the subject by coming to his point. In an instant Follet was on his legs, his face transfigured.

"You'll let me meet the coach, won't you?— Oh, I forgot! One of us has to go to Stratford Downs tomorrow!"

"You must be the one," said the Bishop. "I must be the one to see Evelyn first," he added, in a reminding tone. "I can't divine what is fetching her home so suddenly as this!" And as he watched the summer-lightning play of joy and anxiety over the young man's face, his heart pained for him, for he did divine evil.

He knew Evelyn only too well.

"I am glad he is not in," she said when

she arrived. Her eyes and manner betrayed excitement, with difficulty controlled. "And oh, father! how thankful I am you wouldn't let me be engaged to him!"

"Why?" asked the Bishop, sternly, as he instinctively put her hands from him.

Miss Methuen tremblingly skinned the glove from her left hand, which she held up to her father's eyes, only to dazzle them with the blaze of diamonds on the third finger. The sight hit him to the heart, stopping its beat.

"Yes, I never really loved him! I know it now—now that I really love! What will he do to me, do you think? Will

he kill me? I thought I loved him, God knows I did, but I never really loved before! Father! why don't you speak to me? I am engaged. You cannot prevent it—you will not want to when you know all, when you know *him*! Speak to me, father! Say *something*."

But the Bishop only stung her with his eye.

"You'll break it to him, father? Then I'll see him myself. He'll be more merciful than you! Oh! but you will be glad some day, when you know *him*. You will be glad when you see me

happy. I never honestly loved before! And he is coming to see you as soon as ever he can leave his business."

"What is his business?" asked the Bishop.

"He is in wholesale jewellery—*wholesale*."

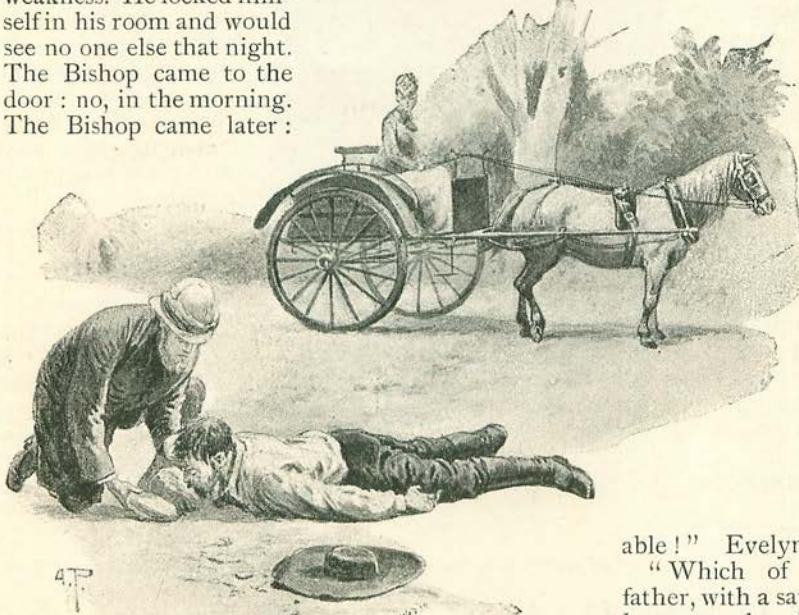
Few would have recognised Dr. Methuen in the glance he cast at the resplendent diamond ring. He could have torn it from his daughter's finger and stamped upon it under her eyes. Wholesale, indeed! There



"FOLLET TOOK IT BADLY."

was scant need to insist on that extenuating word.

That night the Bishop broke the blow : and Follet took it badly. Later, Miss Methuen had the strength of mind to insist on facing him herself ; and from her he bore it even worse. Miss Methuen must have felt considerable contempt for his weakness. He locked himself in his room and would see no one else that night. The Bishop came to the door : no, in the morning. The Bishop came later :



"HE PLACED THE STONE UNDER THE SLEEPER'S FOREHEAD."

he was sobbing. Later still, however—much later—his breathing sounded easy and even. The Bishop crept away on tip-toe, and himself lay down, after intercessory prayer ; but early in the morning he went again to the door ; and there was no more sound of breathing within. The wind came through the keyhole, no other breath touched the ear ; a thread of sunlight marked the bottom of the door. In sudden frenzy the Bishop burst it open, and stood panting in an empty room, his beard bisected by the draught between the open window and the broken door. The bushman's clothes had vanished from their peg ; those of the Reader lay neatly folded on the little table underneath.

* * * *

The wholesale jeweller was for some time prevented by the exigencies of a thriving business from following Evelyn up country. She had worn his grand ring upwards of

a month, when, while driving with her father in the neighbourhood of the river, she descried a man lying on his face in the sun, with his hat off. Evelyn pointed with the finger of contempt to this self-evident case of drunkenness ; and the Bishop also took characteristic action. He stopped the buggy, handed the reins to Evelyn, and jumped out. The man lay at a distance, which Bishop Methuen covered at the double. He found a flat stone, placed it under the sleeper's forehead, and fixed the wideawake as securely as possible over the back of his head and neck. Then he returned to the buggy, again running, and drove homeward at an unusual rate.

"How despicable !" Evelyn exclaimed.

"Which of us ?" asked her father, with a sarcasm he would not have employed towards her in former days.

"That intoxicated wretch, of course !"

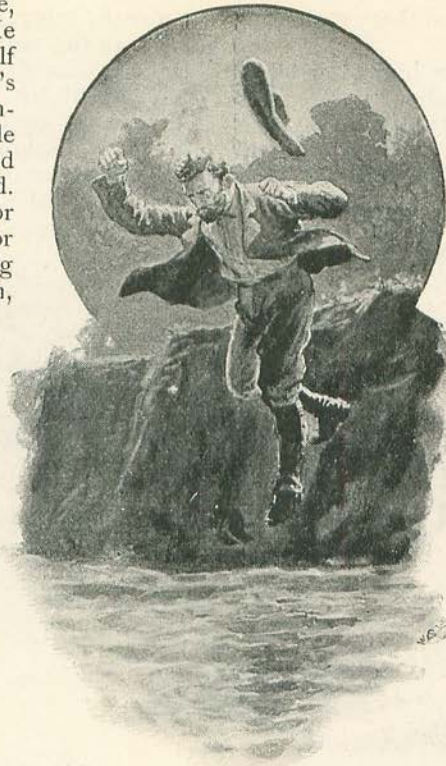
Dr. Methuen lashed his horses. "Evelyn," said he between the strokes, "I profoundly wish that you would be less free with your contempt. There are worse sins than drunkenness, which is chiefly shocking. You should pray to avoid those sins—mark me, they are so much the worse for not *looking* so bad—and try yourself to be becomingly humble."

Evelyn, not unnaturally, sulked during the remainder of that drive. She was too much offended to take notice even of the unwonted pace. On reaching the Lodge she went straight to her room. And the Bishop, saddling his riding horse with his own hands, galloped back to the spot where he had left the drunken sleeper. The man was gone. The Bishop had recognised him ; he was unaware that the man was then in the recovering stage, and that he had himself been recognised.

He scoured the country. Late in the evening, which was very dark, with a sandy

wind, he rode slowly home, completely crestfallen. He bitterly upbraided himself for having spared Evelyn's feelings with a result infinitely more deplorable than any scene she could have created on the road. He had imagined the poor fellow to be incapable for hours to come. Leaving the horse with the groom, he was following round the picket-fence to the front gate, as the night was so dark, when a figure rose from the ground at his very feet. Dr. Methuen had no time to draw back. Strong arms embraced him, a heart thumped thrice against his own, and then the Bishop was left standing alone, peering into the darkness and dust, and listening to the dying beat of foot-steps he should never overtake.

And this was the last he saw of his old schoolfellow's son. Some few weeks later came the noted night when the wholesale jeweller was at length known to be on his way inland to caress the hand that exhibited his merely representative ring. On that night the Bishop read in *The Grazier* of the violent death of Samuel Follet, by drowning, many miles higher up the river. It appeared that the young man's condition had become such as to necessitate a constant supply of watchers; that from one of these he had broken away, jumping into the river and being drowned, as stated. This was all. The Bishop had been alone with it more than an hour when Evelyn came in to bid him good-night. The paper was clenched tightly in his two hands. The pipe between his teeth had long been cold.



"HE JUMPED INTO THE RIVER."

Of late there had been little enough in common between Evelyn and her father; but to-night she desired to say more than the customary three words. She was in great spirits, naturally; she wanted to talk. She shut the door and sat down; she sat down in the chair in which Follet had sat night after night for nearly five months.

"Do not sit there, Evelyn."

Dr. Methuen had found his voice, but to Evelyn it seemed a new voice. It was harsh, yet it quavered. She rose hastily, and as she rose the diamonds on her finger lightened under the lamp.

"Why not?"

"Because—because I wish to be alone."

She stooped to kiss him.

"Do not kiss me!" he cried, pushing back his chair.

"Why—why *ever* not?"

"I am smoking strong tobacco."

"You are not; your pipe is out."

"I don't think so," said the Bishop, attempting in quite good faith to animate that corpse. "Good-night, Evelyn."

"You are vexed with me!" exclaimed the girl, indignantly. "I won't go until you tell me the reason. Pray, what have I done?"

Then the Bishop could contain it no longer—and he never forgave himself for what he did. He jumped up, holding out the paper, and answered with a trembling finger on the place:

"This!"