MYSTERY OF DEADMAN'S FLAT

A ROMANTIC STORY OF THE FAR WEST.

By the Author of "Love or a Lie," "Winning Her Inheritance," Etc. ~

perore his gaze, and her cheeks flushing with unutterable shame.

CHAPTER V.

railway journey of nearly three days, which scorching sun and dust by day and stifling air at night made the most wearisome he thought he had ever traveled, arrived at Venneville, the town

where he was to take the stage coach for

Deadman's Flat, about two hours after

it had started on its weekly journey to

that place. The prospect of spending a week at Venneville, apart from the de-lay in fulfilling the object of his journey, was too intolerable to be entertained for

a moment. Further progress, however, seemed difficult until he fell in with a

party of men who were traveling in search of "luck," and then he found the

journey as pleasant as he had anticipated. The out door life, the frank cordiality of

his companions—who, while they tacitly owned him their superior in birth and education, yet treated him with the honest independence of their class— made the time pass most enjoyably, and

he felt quite sorry, when he parted from them some miles east of Deadman's Flat,

to push on alone, they making their way

farther south.

He entered Deadman's Flat about sun-

set, when there was apparently considerable excitement prevailing in the long, straggling "High" street. Red shirted

miners were lounging or strolling about gaudily dressed or slatternly women

were shrilly discussing some event at their cabin doors, while the children

were scampering to and fro, getting into

everybody's way. The excitement was so great that even Jack Newenham did

not arouse much curiosity as he passed

up the street. After inquiring of a man standing at the door of his store, he

made his way towards the "Red Uni-

corn," as being the only place where he

could get food and accommodation for

As he reached the square he cam

upon a group of men who had just left

the "Red Unicorn." They were the com-

mittee men who had been elected to try

the case of Tom Cairnes' murder. Among

the papers that had been searched dur

ing the first inquiry, to find some clew

to his enemy, one had been overlooked.

It had been discovered that afternoon,

and it gave another turn to the affair,

by proving that his enemy was not a

townsman of theirs. This discovery was

all the more important, because it led to

the acquittal of a man who, in the zeal-

ous and unwise haste of one of the com-

mittee men, had been arrested. Now,

as this man was popular among his fel-low townsmen, his arrest had caused much ill feeling among them towards

the unfortunate committee man who had

suggested his guilt. The other members

were all eager to make some atonement

for their luckless colleague's blunder

and they were warmly-not to say nois

ily-discussing the case, when Newen-ham passed them. Overhearing some of

their words, he stopped before them as they stood there, looking an excited and

rather wild group of men in the dusk of

"What is that you are saying?" he

It was perhaps an unfortunate way of

putting the question; but Jack Newen-

ham, tired, hungry, disgusted, was not

There was a murmur of disapproval

"Look hyar, young man," growled the

possessor of a remarkably forbidding

countenance-"a man that kin call a

murdered man names among his friends

don't allers find his company pleasin'!"

"Murdered! Is that what you call it?

A righteous fate, I should say! It was

to see him that I came here; and I don't

mind telling you that it is ten to one that

I should have put a bullet through him

The tempers of the committee men

having been inflamed by zeal for justice

and the copious draughts of whisky

necessary to make up for the dryness of

that afternoon's proceedings, and being

further irritated by their late failure,

they were not in a frame of mind to bear

patiently this outburst of anger from a

total stranger. They felt to a man that

the honor of Deadman's Flat was being

"Justice is not to be trampled upon,

sorr!" said one, with as much dignity as

a strong Irish brogue and a most un

steadily balanced frame would permit.

Our late depoirted and much esteemed

townsman was kilt by his murderer,

whom justice seeks. He shall die the

"Pity that any decent man should

swing for such a brute!" returned the

young Englishman carelessly. He began

to see that his position was slightly in-

secure, and in consequence became more

dogmatic and daring. "Only a set of duf-

This touched the committee men on

"Sorr," cried the Irishman, whose po-

sition as spokesman was upheld by grunts

and growls on the part of the others,

'you spake like a toirant of the toiran-

nical race ye come from! What is Eng-

land but a tramplin', murdhering coun-

thry entoirely! And you, sorr-with

shame let it be spoke—are a blayguard!

The speaker wound up his speech with

so much energy that his body swayed

forward, and was brought into sharp

contact with Newenham, who, without

waiting to consider whether the blow

might not have been accidental, hit out

straight from the shoulder, and down

went the grandiloquent Irishman flat

upon the ground. His body was forgot-

ten in the conflict that ensued, for the

sight of their fellow committee man

dropping down like a log before the slen-

der, dandy looking aristocrat was more

than they could bear quietly and with

one accord they fell upon him to avenge

There was a fierce, sharp struggle

Newenham, with one arm hitting out at

every head that came conveniently with

in reach, and parrying a perfect storm

of savage blows with the other, though

fighting with all the pluck and dash of

race that has never yet owned itself

beaten, could not have supported the un-

equal contest another minute, when sud-

denly a new element mingled with the

fray. This was apparently friendly to

the young Englishman; for in an unex-

pected moment he found himself sup-

ported by two men, one of whom, as he

dealt out blows indiscriminately, har-

angued the committee men, in a rough

broad accent, as a set of bullying, cow

ardly ruffians. The other said nothing;

but Newenham perceived that his blows were no less forcible. although in his

the cause of outraged law and order.

fers would convict him, to begin with!"

their sorest spot.

death of a dog when he is found!"

outraged in their persons.

myself at the end of the interview!"

in the mood to act cautiously.

asked. "Is that scoundrel Tom Cairnes

the night.

the evening.

from the men.

The Hon. Jack Newenham, after a

She greeted him with a smile, which, while it made him the envoy of all the while it made him the envoy of all the other men standing round, caused him to wonder for a few moments whether he were on his head or his heels. The group of volunteers drew off discreetly, seeing that the two young people were already known to each other, and they gathered round the driver instead, who was being heardtable treated by the most of the country of t was being hospitably treated by the pro-prietor of the "Red Unicorn."

"Any news?" asked the driver, hand-ing back the battered pewter tankard. The question was followed by a short silence, as it was one that required some

mental exertion to answer.

"Tom Cairnes is gone," said one of the miners at last, taking his pipe out of his mouth to give this brief reply.

"Buried him away over thar, this afternoon," said another, with his eyes fixed solemnly on the many others.

fixed solemnly on the men rubbing down The driver stared from one of the

speakers to the other, and then all round the group of men about him. They met his gaze with stolid solemnity, one or two giving a curt nod to confirm the in-"Bullet through his heart," volunteered another. "He was found away thar in the wood. Sorter looked as if he had

been dead some days. Guess he wasn't

fit to remove hyar.' "Has the skunk that shot him been found?" asked Driver George excitedly. "No," said the same man, whose pipe, having gone out, gave him the time taken in refilling it to explain matters. "They' -with a jerk of his thumb in the direction of the hotel-"are sitting on the case now. There was some papers found that p'r'aps may give a clew to the mur-

Driver George looked relieved; and, after taking off his hat and rubbing his forchead with a red handkerchief, he

said questioningly:
"He'll swing when he is found?" "You bet!" came from a dozen voices John Smith and Miss Sparesbrook, standing a little apart from the rest, exchanging the usual commonplaces about the journey and the heat, had become silent. The girl had overheard some of the men's conversation, and she strained her ears in the hope of hearing more. Her back was turned to them, and only John Smith could see her face. It had turned deathly white, and she was gazing

had forgotten his presence. His face paled, too, as he looked at her. Presently the men began to move, and in his fear lest they should see her, he 'Have you any friends in this place?'

straight before her, past him, as if she

he asked hurriedly.

She turned slowly, as if it required a violent effort of will to recall her to the

"I have my father," she said-"Mr. Snaresbrook "Mr. Snaresbrook!" he echoed, think-

ing of that limp, senseless drunkard he had pulled out of the trough. This man her father! He rembered at once that he had been remarkably rough with, and even had had a strong desire to kick, her

The tone of his voice and the expression on his face told the girl his thoughts, and she blushed scarlet-a bitter, shamed blush. John Smith could not look at her; he stared helplessly about him, wondering whom he could get to help her. The few dirty, untidy women who formed the female population of the place, having grown tired of staring at her, were gradually straggling off from the square. The proprietor of the "Red Unicorn" had disappeared. He had a wife who, rumor whispered, was the better horse. Prob ably at that moment he was being harangued by the good woman in their private apartment for some misdemeanor. Mr. John Smith had seen her peremptorily beckon him away a few moments before depriving him of the enjoyment of Driver George's conversation.

The mistress of the "Red Unicorn" was a shrewish, sharp tongued woman, with a temper before which the bravest miner who frequented the house quailed. She was, however, honest and industrious, and probably her temper had been spoiled by her surroundings-slatternly women and rough, dissolute men-for she had come from a respectable home in a quiet English viliage. Mr. Smith thought of her and wondered why she had not come out to look after the passenger. The fact was, at that moment she was far too busy rating her husband at a back door, on the subject of Mr. Snaresbrook himself to attend even to lady passengers.

Mr. Snaresbrook was lying, a forcible and patent text to her sermon, a few dozens yards from them, peacefully slumbering under her pump.

"If you like to have such things lying about as them, Joseph Kezah," she exclaimed, pointing at the unconscious and placid "thing" in question, "I don't! A pretty ornament it is to your kitchin gardin! Such sights ought to shame you! Why don't you turn him out?" stamping her foot.

"He's sorter comfortable and quiet like just now," began her husband with deprecating weakness. But his wife flounced away from him into the room where she had been cooking the evening meal, slamming the door behind her.

Part of the domestic storm reached the ears of John Smith through the open front door. He shrugged his shoulders;

yet he felt that this woman was the only friend with whom he could trust the girl. Happily he did not know that it was the girl's own father who had raised the whirlwind.

"Do you know where my father is?" asked the girl anxiously.

"I-I don't think you can see himjust yet. I'll go and find him for you, he said awkwardly. "But, if you will wait here, I will call Mrs. Kezah."

The girl understood, and her lips formed into the hard bitter line that the thought of her father's degradation always brought there. Mr. Smith turned to go. But he suddenly stepped back.

You heard what they said-about The body was found close to where we were that morning. I think it would be wiser not to say that we came that way," he said, in a low constrained voice, feeling unable to raise his eyes to

meet hers. She looked at him inquiringly. It was strange, but as they talked of her father she had quite forgotten Thomas Cairnes. It all came back to her now, however, and her face paled slowly with the same horror and fear that had fallen upon her

while listening to the conversation between the men. "You see"- he began, looking at her with eyes scarcely less troubled than

"I see," she said, her evelids drooming

dazed condition he could see but little; in fact, he was scarcely conscious of any-thing more until he found himself inside the "Red Unicorn," to which place of refuge he had been conveyed by his de-liverers.

For a few moments he lay half stunned on the floor, where he had dropped on entering. Then he struggled to his feet and found himself face to face with one of his rescuers—the young man who had rated his assailants so heartily.

"I hope they haven't damaged you much," he said, in a pure tone and with a faultless accent—"the cowardly



"I hope they haven't damaged you much."
Newenham certainly did look rather Newenham certainly did look rather "damaged:" in fact, he presented a most pitiable appearance, with a swollen nose and cut lip, his clothes nearly torn off his back, and one eye fast closing up. He still retained consciousness enough of what had happened to be slightly amused and astonished at the difference between his rescuer's present and past mode of ex-pressing himself. Although his countenance in its present condition was incapable of displaying much expression, it must have betrayed his surprise, for the young miner bit his lip, and, turning upon his heel, walked off to the farther end of

Newenham, however, found himself Kezah, popularly known as "Quaker Joe," having at last convinced himself that he was not likely to hurt the feelings of the committee men by attending to the wants of the man they had just chastised, had come forward with some brandy. One or two of the men attached to the hotel also drew near to have a look at him, while a few straggled in from the bar room beyond. They were all dispersed, however, by a woman's shrill voice, which, beginning in some distant corner of the house, became higher as it approached. It had a startling effect upon the men present—they all fled be-fore it; and by the time the lady herself burst into the room not a soul was to be seen but her legal lord and master and Jack Newenham and his other rescuer, Mr. Snaresbrook, who, seated on a box close by, had been watching with much

interest the administration of the brandy. In the confusion of tongues that fol lowed Mr. Snaresbrook stealthily appropriated the bottle, which still contained some brandy, and retired into the gar-den. When he was sought for a little later, he was found slumbering near the water butt—he having been forbidden by Mrs. Kezah ever to approach the pump again. He was clasping the empty brandy bottle tightly in his hand, and, as they bent over him with a lantern, he stirred restlessly, opening his dull bleared

"Oh, what a weary world this is!" he long for quiet! Go 'long! I'm a peash-

The hand that held the lantern was sharply thrust on one side, so that its rays should no longer fall upon the spectacle of degraded manhood. John Smith, who held the lantern, understood the reason of that bitter, passionate ges-ture of the girl by his side. He set the light gently down upon the ground and walked away through the dark garden on to the road. Perhaps until that moment, when he had seen its effects in the agony and shame of the daughter's gesture, he had never understood to the full the horrible degrading power of drink.

He did not wait for the girl to join him, knowing that she would stay out there in the lonely night till her drunken father should arouse himself sufficiently to be led back to the shed where, by the charity of the proprietor of the "Red Unicorn," he was allowed to sleep of the drunken fits of the day. Not till then would she go back with weary feet and sad eves to her own room. The young man's face grew very gloomy indeed as he marched along the moonlit road out to the distant miners' camp where he had made himself a home.

CHAPTER VI.

The acquaintance struck up between Jack Newenham and John Smith during the scuffle did not end with it. Smith came into town from his "claim" away in the mountains every day. Nobody but himself knew why he came, because the facilities for gambling, drinking and fighting, which were apparently the chief attractions to the rest of his mates, were never made use of by him.

If he generally came in the company of half a dozen miners bent "on the spree," he nearly always went back alone; and it was noticed that he was usually alone during the hour or two he staved in the town. He would, in a lazy, indifferent fashion, drop off from the rest of the party when they reached the outskirts of the town, and pursue his own course, which generally ended at the "Red Unicorn." There he lounged about the bar room, or leaned smoking against the fence that shut off the small inclosure in front of the building from the square until it was time to go home. It was here, rather earlier than usual, that Jack Newenham found him on the evening after the scuffle.

The young Englishman thanked him again for his aid, and Mr. John Smith received the thanks with coldness and curt indifference. That sudden glimpse of good breeding and education displayed the night before was the only one Jack Newenham detected. To-night Mr. John Smith was no different from the men who surrounded him. He did not receive Jack Newenham's advances in a friendly spirit-he even tried to repel them. But Newenham, partly from gratitude, partly from curiosity, was determined to keep up the acquaintance. He had tried to express a sense of his obligation to Mr. Snaresbrook, who at least bore unmistakably the stamp of : gentleman. But during all that day Mr. Snaresbrook had been simply incapable of receiving any thanks for favors conferred, and so Newenham had been ob liged to defer his expression of gratitude till a more convenient time. He began to speak of this gentleman to John Smith, when he had at last succeeded in show ing the latter that he had no intention of

being repulsed.
"He is a gentleman," he said; "at least should judge so from what I saw and heard of him last night."
"He was a gentleman," was the curt
answer, as John Smith knocked the

once from ms pipe, preparatory to re-The young Englishman gased thought-fully across the square, as he leaned his folded arms upon the fence. "Such a life as this must be something

terrible to men who have been brought up in civilized surroundings," he said. bruptly. Re looked a little curiously at his com-

panion as he spoke; he did not want to pry into his affairs, but he wondered how he, who was evidently a gentleman, could bear life at Deadman's Flat; but John Smith appeared thoroughly indif-

ferent.

"There's something under it all," he answered carelessly, "which isn't as rotten as the surface. I recken you'll find the men aren't all brutes—and the wo men"— He stopped abruptly, for Mrs. Kezah had appeared in the doorway and was bearing down upon them.

"I hope she isn't going to make a row," muttered John Smith, preparing for flight.

Mrs. Kezah, however, was fairly pa-

cific and thoroughly anxious.

"A pretty sort of man you are, John Smith," she said, with much rustling of her starched cotton gown, as she stoppe before the two young men, "leading men to perdition, as if they wasn't a-goin' there fast enough of themselves, and draggin' sweet innocent girls, who ought to have a 'ome like 'eaven for their goodness, with them!"

Jake Newenham stared, considerably

bewildered and astonished at this con-fused—if earnest—form of address; but Mr. John Smith apparently understood for he flushed and looked very uncomfortable. Mr. Snaresbrook had paid him an early visit at the mp that morning, and had requeste allowed to sit in John Smith's cabin a little while, to sleep off the headache which his walk under the burning sun had given him. John Smith, knowing that there was nothing more dangerous in the cabin than a little cold tea, had consented. When he returned from his work at noonday, he found that Mr. Snaresbrook had decamped. With sundry misgivings, and many prickings of conscience. he had hastily searched a small hiding place where he kept a trifling store of money, and, as he had expected, not a cent remained. Mr. Snaresbrook had of course "made tracks" for the nearest "bottling works." The discovery had caused John Smith much uneasiness all day. Between him and his work would rise the pale repreachful face of Snares-brook's daughter. He felt that he was morally responsible for any state the confirmed drunkard might now be in. But for the uneasiness and discomfiture caused by this event he would not have walked over to Deadman's Flat that evening, for he had reasons of his own for not wishing to meet the Englishman whom he had rescued from the tender mercies of the Law and Justice commit-

Mrs. Kezah's vehement reproaches confirmed his suspicions. He listened in silence as she stormed at his wickedness in giving money to such a guzzling, meless creature, while his poor daughter was breaking her heart over him already. They had found out that he had

paid that morning visit to the camp; and, as he had not a penny when he started, and came home plentifully provided, they all concluded that John Smith had given him the means to indulge in his pet vice.

"And only last night he promised his poor dear daughter that he wouldn't drink another drop! Ho even gave her up every cent he had, so as not to be led into temptation; and then the first thing you do is to fling him into the mire again. Do you call that generosity? I call it a very bad piece of work indeed—downright disgraceful!"

John Smith, taking all the circum stances of the case into consideration. thought it was; but he did not explain the situation, nor how little his own generosity had had to do with the matter. The loss of that small store meant considerable disappointment to himself; but that did not for a moment trouble his thoughts. He was abashed, confused, dismayed. He could think only of Elaine and that, through his unpardonable care lessness, he had added to her pain and sorrow. Newenham, although he did not know the rights of the case, was quite sorry for him.

"It cuts her to the quick-all because of that solemn promise of his-the old villain!" exclaimed Mrs. Kezah. "And here you are sticking here like a leech when she is wandering about the place to try to bring home the wretch whose blood may be on your head! Where on

earth is the man going to now?" While Mrs. Kezah spoke, John Smith thrusting his pipe into his pocket, had leaped over the fence, and was striding off towards the long red road, which the darkness would soon hide from view.

"What a firebrand he is!" exclaime the good woman, turning to Jack Newenham; but that young man was also disappearing over the fence, and a few moments later she saw him join John Smith, so she retired into the building, shaking her head deprecatingly.

John Smith's opinion of her had not been far wrong. When he had found her, at the end of that stormy scene with her partner, and had explained the condition of the friendless traveler outside. she had first declared that no power on earth would induce her to receive into her house the daughter of such a drunken old scoundrel. John Smith's entreaties, however, uttered with all the old grace that had once made it so easy for him to win favors of women in a very different rank, had some effect upon her. She went out to see the "minx," as she called her, and then the "minx" did the rest for herself. Half an hour later Elaine was established in the "Red Unicorn," with Mrs. Kezah fussing about her as if she had been her own daughter, restored after a long absence.

Mr. Snaresbrook himself seemed to have taken up his quarters for good at the "Red Unicorn," in spite of Mrs. Kezah's endeavors to keep him out. Since the arrival of his daughter, however, she had made no further attempt to drive him away, and she even confine

her abuse of him to his own ears. Jack Newenham had not yet seen Elaine. He simply concluded that she was one of the loud voiced, red cheeked and gaudily dressed young women who formed the marriageable lady population of Deadman's Flat; and, when he saw how much John Smith had been dis turbed at the thought of having wounded her feelings, he felt sorry for him. He could not help thinking that there was something more in the young eman's mental disturbance than the simple chivalrous vexation at having disappointed a woman.

He felt more sorry than ever for him when he overtook him on the red, dusty road, and saw how pale his face had grown. This convinced him that the interest John Smith took in Miss Snares brook must be very strong indeed. Smith seemed to know where he was going, so Newenham let him alone and marched ilently by his side, both men smoking. John Smith walked on for some dis tance, paying but very little attention to the scene around him; perhaps he had grown accustomed to such sights, for he came by this road every day that he walked over to Deadman's Flat. Suddenly turning an abrupt bend in the road, they

round themselves at the foot of a steep ascent, on the summit of which, clearly outlined against the yellow evening sky, was the slender figure of a girl, who was standing quite still, looking away from them. There was something so intensely pathetic in her patient attitude that even Jack Newenham, although he did not know what vigil she was keeping, felt his heart softened at the sight. As for Mr. John Smith, he muttered something that sounded remarkably like an imprecation, and proceeded hastily to mount the

steep incline.
She heard their approach and turned to look at them. to look at them.

The first glimpse Jack Newenham obtained of her face dispelled at once all feelings of surprise at and disapproval of his companion's taste; the second glimpse he obtained as he stood by her side and saw the flush with which she greeted Mr. Smith made the latter's trouble at

tion, and proceeded hastily to mount the

having pained her seem perfectly natural.

Not wishing to be in the way, the young Englishman turned his back and looked discreetly about him; in doing looked discreetly about him; a new featso he came face to face with a new feat-ure in the landscape. Sitting by the road side, his long legs stretched limply in the dust, his back propped up against the great heap of broken rock which

crowned the summit, was Mr. Snares brook. There was a vacant look in the mild gate of his fine blue eyes; but Newenham, seeing that they were turned full upon himself, felt boand to make some sort of greeting, urged perhaps by the awkward stlence that reigned between the young couple behind him.

"Good evening, sir," he said politely. Mr. Snaresbrook, vaguely recalling the courtesies of the days when he "was a gentleman," made an unsteady inclina-tion of his body, and with a violent ef-

for rose to his feet.

"Glad to see you," he said affably.

"Fine view from here—peaceful rest, evening sunshine. My daughter—'low me to introduce you, sir-and I come to enjoy the 'fect of peaceful sunset. By George, sir, they talk so much of that low murder down there that we can't stand it-we come out here for a little peace and beauty!"

Newenham made some suitable reply and tried to continue the conversation; but the intensely bitter look of reproach cast at himself and John Smith by the girl when she slightly acknowledged her father's introduction made the effort difficult. Nor did the scraps of conversation between the other two which he unavoidably overheard make his polite commonplaces easier to utter. He wished he had stayed and talked to Mrs. Kezah. "Why did you come?" the girl ex-claimed in a hard tone. "You came to

look for us, I know. Why did you do it?"

"Why did you come?" without alluding to the degradation of the gentleman who was so cheerfully, if indistinctly, discussing the view with Newenham a few paces from them. Per haps his silence touched her. She suddenly changed her tone.

"We are going back now," she said with a false cheerfulness; "we were tired and sat down here to rest. Is that your claim away down there?"

She pointed to where the road dipped abruptly, again winding down among the red pines; from where they stood they could catch a glimpse of a clearing which she had been looking at when the came up. The color rushed swiftly into his face and as quickly died away. She had been looking for his claim!

"Yes," he returned briefly, feeling unable to say any more. "I think we will go," she said. "Father"-stepping over to Mr. Snares-brook and laying a slender hand ap-

pealingly upon his trembling arm-"will "Certainly, my dear! Shentlemen"with much dignity, leaning heavily on the arm which had been slipped within

his-"I hopsh to have the pleasure of seeing you both soon; if you will dine with us, my daughter"-"Come, father," she interposed gently: then with a grave bow to the young men she drew him forward.

The road before them looked gray and lonely in the dusk, and Deadman's Flat was a good way off. As the two men drew back to let the girl pass on with the helpless, half drunken father, Newenham remonstrated.

"You won't let them go alone!" he exclaimed in a quick low tone. "See how dark it is getting; and it will be late be fore they get to Deadman's Fiat!" "She wishes it," said John Smith

He preferred to fall in with her wishes on this occasion, for always after the first few moments, when, perhaps under the impulse of sudden sympathy, they met and spoke frankly together, a feeling of constraint would fall upon them and they would seem to shrink from each

It was a relief to him to see her pass down the road, where the fast gathering shadows would soon shut her out from his sight. Jack Newenham, however, thinking of her-unprotected, young, beautiful-and of the possibility of her meeting on that long, lonely road any of those rough, perhaps drunken miners, with only that wretched father to pro tect her, could scarcely be prevented from rushing after them.

When he gave his reason for wishing to do so, John Smith looked at him is half amused, half impatient wonder. "Those men harm her! Why, there isn't one who wouldn't walk twenty miles

CHAPTER VII.

Perhaps that silent walk in search of Miss Snaresbrook had formed a subtle bond of sympathy between the two young men; at any rate from that night John Smith did not try to avoid Jack Newenham. Another incident drew them even closer together-at least it considerably affected the young Englishman, who was beginning to feel something stronger than mere interested curiosity in this new acquaintance of his.

Jack felt certain that, though John Smith mingled freely among them, liv ing their life as completely as though he had been accustomed to it all his days he was yet as really out of place among the inhabitants of Deadman's Flat and its outlying miners' camps as Miss aresbrook herself. He was indeed deeply interested in them both, because

ne was considerably puzzled. Any prejudice he had formed against the girl before knowing her had long since vanished, and he now thought as highly of her as did any man or woman in Dead-man's Flat. He could not understand the state of affairs between herself and John Smith. He had first felt certain that it was a decided case between them; but after a few days looking on at what he expected to be a comedy of love mak-ing, he was obliged to come to the con-clusion that there was really nothing be-tween them after all. Indeed, there were moments when they almost seemed to dislike each other. They scarcely ever sought or stayed long in each other's society—they rather appeared to avoid meeting, and the constraint upon them when they did meet and talk to-gether was more compatible with dislike or even fear than the shyness of a love not brave enough to declare itself; and yet, in spite of all, there was no doubt that John Smith had in some way con-stituted himself her protector, and that she silently submitted to and even leaned upon his guardianship.

All the new interests and excitements
in his life still left Jack Newenham

plenty of time for his own affairs; and there were moments when he could hardly force himself to stay another day away from that lonely little girl in New York, chained to the bedside of an exacting, unsympathizing invalid. He had a reason for staying on which, springing out of his love for her, was strong enough to help him conquer his own desires. He had written to tell her of Mr. Thomas Cairnes' death, though he had not informed her of the manner in which he met it. He only said that Tom Cairnes was dead, and that she need fear no more for her brother. That brother himself was the reason of his staying on at the "Red Unicorn." A suspicion was forming in his own mind which he wished to verify. Subtle as his questions were, watchful as he was of every word and look, Jack Newenham could gain no information from John Smith concerning his past life. His natural delicacy made it impossible to try to force a confidence; he could only

In the meantime the would be avengers of the late Mr. Thomas Cairnes were not idle. The letter that had been found on the day of Jack Newenham's arrival, in a crevice of the wall of the cabin honored by the presence of Mr. Cairnes when at home, was now considered a certain clew to the discovery of the mur-derer. The letter was dated from Venneville, and one of the committeemen had himself gone there to make inquiries, but he had not yet returned nor sent any message. The Hon. Jack Newenham heard a good deal about the affair. Partly from a hint given by Mr. John Smith and partly from his own feelings on the matter, he had given up all thought of resenting the committeemen's inhospi-table welcome, and he had also, as John Smith had prophesied, considerably mod-ified his opinions on the rough mining population. He had on several occasions caught glimpses of things beneath the surface which had made him considerably ashamed of his previously drawn conclusions.

Acting upon all these considerations, he had made advances to the Irishman who had been the chief sufferer in that slight difference of opinion, and who had come out of the fray in a much worse condition than the object of his wrath. The advance had been received with such complete absence of resentment or even recollection of that "trifling affair of honor, sorr!" that Newenham was slightly surprised, and could not help laughing. That laughter, in which the Irishman heartily joined, dispelled all lingering distrust from his heart, and they were now all on the most friendly terms. So very standing that Jack Newenham was invited to join the committee sitting with closed doors, and to inspect the important letter itself. Mr. John Smith was also included in the invitation, he having gained the public confidence by the decided genius he had shown on one or two critical occasions and the business like way in which he had helped to carry out some sentences passed in defence of law

The letter, with much solemnity, was laid upon the rude table in the room set apart for this affair of justice until the time when it should culminate in a noose hanging from the branch of a certain tree. There was a cool determination, a quiet sternness in the dark, sunburnt faces gathered round the table that gave moral effect to the scene. Newenhau took up the letter and read it calmly through, though how he did it he could not say. Perhaps the consciousness of all those watchful, resolute eyes fixed upon his face steadied him, although he might well have shown some signs of discomposure, knowing the issues at stake. The letter was from Redfern Churchill, signed with his full name. It was written under the pressure of fierce rage and despair, by a man who was evi dently maddened by treachery and ruin. The writer swore he would have his revenge, even if he had to hunt Mr. Thomas Cairnes down to the death. It was dated about a week before the mur-

"Guess we're on the trail, stranger," said one of the men, as Newenham at last laid the letter upon the table.

"Yes," he replied, his voice sounding far off in his own cars. He drew back from the circle of stern faced, resolute men, who would be that brother's judges, and stood with his own face in the shadow. John Smith, carelessly advancing, took his place. He lifted up the letter and read it quietly

through. "I reckon this gentleman is euchred," said the man who had spoken to Newenham. It was he who had found the letter, and he was feeling very triumphant. "You bet," said John Smith laconically, laying the letter down upon the

"Let's get out of this," whispered New enham to him under cover of the buzz of general conversation which then be

John Smith nodded, and they left the room together, making their way out of the house into the square. They stood for a moment lowking across the open space towards the street, which was comparatively quiet to-night.

At the farther end a flare of flaming oil lamps from the open doors of the gambling saloon lighted up the summer evening dusk. Newenham, restless with a feverish excitement, harassed by doubts and fears, felt that anything would be welcome to take his thoughts away from the scene he had just witnessed. He suggested turning in there to see what sort of a place the saloon was, as he had

not yet paid it a visit.

John Smith acceded by simply turning

in its direction. Some ten minutes' walking brought them to the hospitable doors of Macnab's saloon. As John Smith unconcernedly made his way through the bar room, nodding carelessly nere and there to those of his acquaintances who, lounging about, helped to make up the crowd of smokers and drinkers, he followed too, with a regretful thought of the fresh sweet air he had left outside.

They went on to a farther room, where tables were set about, each one containing its complement of silent, earnest gamblers, some of whom would six als

mg mere till daylight, their slience broken only by words marking the course of the game or occasional imprecations as the luck changed. The two young men strolled up to the tables; John Smith, being greeted here and there with a silent nod by some more of his acquaintances at the tables, took up his place near one of them. A little later Newenham, happening to look up from place near one of them. A little later Newenham, happening to look up from a game in the progress of which he himself had become interested, caught sight of his friend, and was startled at the change which had taken place in him. John Smith, leaning against the opposite wall, was watching the play of four of his friends at the table close to him. His plue had gone out forgetten, therest pipe had gone out, forgotten, though clenched between his set teeth. His face was pale and rigid with the intense excitement of the unholy lust of play, and his eyes were gleaming with a flerce

One of his friends at the table, glanc out a fresh hand, saw the gambling fever stamped upon his face and said:

"Take a hand yourself, boss! You look like playing stakes with old Scratch



"You look like playing stakes with a Scratch hisself!"

This remark attracted the attention of the other players at the table. They looked up too, and with a laugh or an imprecation, according to their various modes of speech, repeated their fellow

gambler's invitation.

A sudden shudder shook John Smith from head to foot, breaking that rigid terrible look of eager excitement, and

he took the forgotten pipe from his lips.

"No?" he answered curtly.

In a way he was popular, but the men among whom his lines were cast felt that he lacked two things to make him a good comrade—he neither gambled nor drank. It might have been the spirit of human weakness which does not like to feel itself in the presence of superior strength, or it might have been not like to feel itself in the presence of superior strength, or it might have been more directly prompted simply by the desire to win money from a novice, but at any rate they suddenly attacked John Smith, trying to force him by entreaties, taunts, or jeering chaff to join them. For a moment or two, baited by them all, John Smith kept silence, his breath coming hard between his set teeth. Then his eyes, glittering with a strange brightness, were turned furiously upon his tempters.

"I will not play!" he said, drawing himself up to his full height. "For I've sworn to myself never to touch another card as long as I live, and I'll keep my oath. But, it isn't to save my pile, a you say. Take it all, and mu may it do you! It will only carry you a little faster to the misery those cards have brought me to!"

dashed down a bandful of gold and sildashed down a plantation of the cards, ver on the table, scattering the cards, while the coins went spinning in every direction. The outbreak was so su and unexpected-he had gained the nickname of Sleepy Smith-that the men for a moment were silenced. In the sudden Juli John Smith turned his back upon the table and passed rapidly down the room and disappeared through the

doorway. Newenham followed as swiftly as he could. He had been looking on at the scene of temptation with an interest so painful in its intentness that it could be measured only by the relief he felt at John Smith's victory. He overtook h outside in the starlight, but they walked on for some minutes in silence, John Smith apparently quite unconscious that he had a companion. Newenham was at length forced to break the silence by that new feeling of respect for his friend which had suddenly grown up in his

heart. "Why did you do that?" he asked.
"I don't know," replied John Smith,
thinking Newenham alluded to what had just taken place at the card table. He spoke now without any of the affect tation of roughness, and it was the refined, rather than languid voice of a man accustomed to good society. "I was mad, I think, for the moment—men are apt to make fools of themselves when

they are mad." "I did not mean that-I meant, Why did you let me take you there? If I had "It's the first time I've been in such a

place since- But it did not matter -rather wearily. "I wanted to see whether I could stand it; and"-with an echo of that terrible passion—"I failed!"
"Nonsense, my dear fellow! I don't know what has brought you here, but, after to-night, I would back you through

thick and thin!" John Smith stopped abruptly in the road, and turned to Newenham, his face looking very white in the starlight.

"You don't know," he said steadily "If you did, you would not say that. I am a thief. One night I was at such a place as that, and a man was there who had a bundle of bank notes. I found them and took them."

Newenham drew back a step in the road. It was a terrible confess an honorable man to hear, and, if this man who made is were the man he sus-pected him to be, it was tenfold more degrading and repulsive. Probably that shrinking was unconscious, for Newenham was too generous to trample on a man who had fallen; but, unconscious or not, John Smith noticed it, and felt the degradation keenly. He too moved fur-

ther away. "Don't think I shall expect you to notice me," he said awkwardly, but with a touch of patient humility which gave the words a deep pathos. "It was be-cause of that—that I tried to keep you off at first." Then he turned upon his heel and walked swiftly back towards

the camp, Continued next Saturday.

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