

one thing was getting pretty clear to Boots : namely, that Mrs. Harry Walmers Junior's temper was on the move. When Master Harry took her round the waist, she said he "teased her so ;" and when he says, "Norah, my young May Moon, your Harry tease you ?" she tells him, "Yes ; and I want to go home !"

A biled fowl, and baked bread-and-butter pudding, brought Mrs. Walmers up a little ; but Boots could have wished, he must privately own to me, to have seen her more sensible of the voice of love, and less abandoning of herself to currants. However, Master Harry he kept up, and his noble heart was as fond as ever. Mrs. Walmers turned very sleepy about dusk, and began to cry. Therefore, Mrs. Walmers went off to bed as per yesterday ; and Master Harry ditto repeated.

About eleven or twelve at night, comes back the Governor in a chaise, along with Mr. Walmers and an elderly lady. Mr. Walmers looks amused and very serious, both at once, and says to our missis, "We are much indebted to you, ma'am, for your kind care of our little children, which we can never sufficiently acknowledge. Pray ma'am, where is my boy ?" Our missis says, "Cobbs has the dear child in charge, sir. Cobbs, show Forty !" Then, he says to Cobbs, "Ah Cobbs ! I am glad to see *you*. I understood you was here !" And Cobbs says, "Yes, sir. Your most obedient, sir."

I may be surprised to hear Boots say it, perhaps ; but, Boots assures me that his heart beat like a hammer, going up stairs. "I beg your pardon, sir," says he, while unlocking the door ; "I hope you are not angry with Master Harry. For, Master Harry is a fine boy, sir, and will do you credit and honour." And Boots signifies to me, that if the fine boy's father had contradicted him in the daring state of mind in which he then was, he thinks he should have "fetched him a crack," and taken the consequences.

But, Mr. Walmers only says, "No, Cobbs. No, my good fellow. Thank you !" And, the door being opened, goes in.

Boots goes in too, holding the light, and he sees Mr. Walmers go up to the bedside, bend gently down, and kiss the little sleeping face. Then, he stands looking at it for a minute, looking wonderfully like it (they do say he ran away with Mrs. Walmers) ; and then he gently shakes the little shoulder.

"Harry, my dear boy ! Harry !"

Master Harry starts up and looks at him. Looks at Cobbs too. Such is the honour of that mite, that he looks at Cobbs, to see whether he has brought him into trouble.

"I am not angry, my child. I only want you to dress yourself and come home."

"Yes, Pa."

Master Harry dresses himself quickly. His breast begins to swell when he has nearly finished, and it swells more and more

as he stands at last, a-looking at his father ; his father standing a-looking at him, the quiet image of him.

"Please may I"—the spirit of that little creature, and the way he kept his rising tears down !—"Please dear Pa—may I—kiss Norah, before I go ?"

"You may, my child."

So, he takes Master Harry in his hand, and Boots leads the way with the candle, and they come to that other bedroom : where the elderly lady is seated by the bed, and poor little Mrs. Harry Walmers Junior is fast asleep. There, the father lifts the child up to the pillow, and he lays his little face down for an instant by the little warm face of poor unconscious little Mrs. Harry Walmers Junior, and gently draws it to him—a sight so touching to the chambermaids who are peeping through the door, that one of them calls out "It's a shame to part 'em !" But this chambermaid was always, as Boots informs me, a soft-hearted one. Not that there was any harm in that girl. Far from it.

Finally, Boots says, that's all about it. Mr. Walmers drove away in the chaise, having hold of Master Harry's hand. The elderly lady and Mrs. Harry Walmers Junior that was never to be, (she married a Captain, long afterwards, and died in India), went off next day. In conclusion, Boots puts it to me whether I hold with him in two opinions ; firstly, that there are not many couples on their way to be married, who are half as innocent of guile as those two children ; secondly, that it would be a jolly good thing for a great many couples on their way to be married, if they could only be stopped in time and brought back separately.

THE LANDLORD.

URIAH TATTENHALL is my elder brother by fifteen years. I am Sam Tattenhall.

My brother Uriah rang at his gate at his snug retreat of Trumpington Cottage, Peckham, near London, exactly at a quarter to six—his regular hour—when the omnibus from the city set him down at the end of the lane. It was December, but the weather was fine and frosty, and as it was within a few days of Christmas, his children—four in number—two boys, just come home from school, and two girls who came home from school every day—were all on the alert to receive him, with a world of schemes for the delectation of the coming holiday-time.

My brother Uriah was an especial family-man. He made himself the companion and play-fellow of his children on all occasions that his devotion to his business in the city would admit of. His hearty, cheery voice was heard as he entered the hall, and while he was busy pulling-off his over-coat, and hanging up his hat : "Well, my boys, well George, well Miss Lucy, there. What are you all about ?

How's the world used you since this morning? Where's mamma? The kettle boiling, eh?" The running fire of hilarity that always animated him seemed to throw sunshine and a new life into the house, when he came in. The children this evening rushed out into the hall, and crowded round him with such a number of "I say, pa's," and "Do you know, pa?" and "Don't tell him now, Mary,—let him guess. Oh! you'll never guess, pa!" that he could only hurry them all into the sitting-room before him like a little flock of sheep, saying, "Well, well, you rogues,—well, well,—let us have some tea, and then all about it."

The fire blazed bonnily, as it was wont, in the bright grate, and that and the candles made the room, with light and warmth, the very paradise of comfort. Mrs. Tattenhall, a handsome woman of five and thirty or so—she might be more, but she did not look it—was just in the act of pouring the water from a very bright little kettle into the equally bright silver tea-pot, and with a sunny, rosy, youthful, and yet matronly face, turned smilingly at his entrance, and said, "Well, my dear, is it not a very cold night?"

"Not in this room, certainly, my dear," said my brother Uriah, "and with such a snuggerly before one, who cares for cold outside."

Mrs. Tattenhall gave him a brighter smile still, and the neat Harriet coming in with the toast, the whole family group was speedily seated round the tea-table, and the whole flood of anticipated pleasures and plans of the younger population let loose, and cordially entered into, and widened and improved by my brother Uriah. He promised them an early night at the very best pantomime, and they were to read all about all the pantomimes in the newspapers, and find out which was the best. He meant to take them to see all sorts of sights, and right off-hand on Christmas Eve he was going to set up a Christmas-tree, and have Christkindchen, and all sorts of gifts under it for everybody. He had got it all ready done by a German who came often to his warehouse, and it was somewhere, not far off just now.

"Thank you, papa,—thank you a thousand times. Oh! what heaps of fun!" exclaimed the children, altogether.

"Why, really, my dear," said Mrs. Tattenhall, delighted as the children, "what has come to you? You quite out-do yourself, good as you always are. You are quite magnificent in your projects."

"To be sure," said Uriah, taking hold of the hands of little Lucy, and dancing round the room with her. "To be sure; we may just as well be merry as sad; it will be all the same a hundred years hence."

Presently the tea-table was cleared, and, as they drew round the fire, my brother Uriah pulled out a book, and said, "George, there's a

nice book—begin, and read it aloud: it will be a very pleasant book for these winter evenings before all the dissipation begins. It is Pringle's Adventures in South Africa, and is almost as good as Robinson Crusoe. I knew Pringle well; a lame, little man, that you never would dream could sit on a horse, much less ride after lions and elephants in that style."

"Lions and elephants!" all were silent, and George read on. He read till eight o'clock, their bed-time, and the whole group—parents and children—were equally delighted with it. As they closed the book—"Now," said the father, "would it not be grand fun to live out there, and ride after the lions and elephants?"

"Ah! grand fun!" said the boys, but the mother and the girls shuddered at the lions. "Well, you could stay in the house, you know," said Bob.

"Right, my fine fellow," said the father, clapping him on the shoulder. "So now off to bed, and dream all about it."

When the children were gone, my brother Uriah stretched out his feet on the fender and fell into a silence. When my brother's silence had lasted some time his wife said, "Are you sleepy, my dear?"

"No; never was more wakeful," said Uriah; "really, my dear, I never was less inclined to be sprightly: but it won't do to dash the spirits of the children. Let them enjoy the Christmas as much as they can, they will never be young but once."

"What is amiss?" asked Mrs. Tattenhall, with a quick apprehensive look. "Is there something amiss? Good gracious! you frighten me."

"Why no, there is nothing exactly amiss; there is nothing new; but the fact is, I have just taken stock, and to-day finished casting all up, and struck the balance."

"And is it bad? Is it less than you expected?" asked Mrs. Tattenhall, fixing her eyes seriously on her husband's face.

"Bad? No, not bad, nor good. I'll tell you what it is. You've heard of a toad in a mud wall. Well, that's me. Twenty years ago, I went into business with exactly three thousand pounds, and here I have been trading, and fagging, and caring, and getting, and losing, business extending, and profits getting less and less, making large sales, and men breaking directly after, and so the upshot is,—twenty years trade, and the balance the same to a pound as that I began with. Three thousand I started with, and three thousand is precisely my capital at this moment."

"Is that all?" said Mrs. Tattenhall, wonderfully relieved. "Be thankful, my dear Uriah, that you have three thousand pounds. You have your health wonderfully, we have all our health; we have children, as good and promising children as anybody is blest with, and a happy home, and live as well and

comfortably as any one need to do, or as I wish, I am sure. What do we want more?"

"What do we want more?" said Uriah, drawing up his legs suddenly, and clapping his hands in a positive sort of a way on his knees. "Why, I for one, want a great deal more. We've children, you say, and a home, and all that. Heaven be thanked, so we have! but I want our children to have a home after us. Three thousand pounds divided amongst four, leaves about seven hundred and fifty each. Is it worth while to fag a whole life, and leave them that and a like prospect? No," continued Uriah, in a considering manner, and shaking his head. "No, I want something more; more for myself; more for them; more room, more scope, a wider horizon, and a more proportionate result of a whole human existence. And do you know Maria what I have come to as the best conclusion? To go out to Australia."

"To go out to Australia!" said Mrs. Tattenhall, in astonishment. "My dear Uriah, you are joking. You mean no such thing."

"But that is just what I do mean," said Uriah, taking his wife's hand affectionately; "I have thought of it long, and the toad-in-the-wall balance has determined me. And now what I ask of you is to look at it calmly and earnestly. You know the Smiths, the Browns, and the Robinsons have gone out. They report the climate delicious, and that wonders are doing. A new country, if it be a good country, is the place to grow and thrive in, without doubt. Look at the trees in a wood. They grow up and look very fine in the mass. The wood, you say, is a very fine wood; but when you have looked at the individual trees, they are crowded and spindled up. They cannot put out a single bough beyond a certain distance; if they attempt it, their presuming twigs are poked back again by sturdy neighbours all round, that are all struggling for light and space like them. Look then at the tree on the open plain,—how it spreads and hangs in grand amplitude its unobstructed boughs and foliage: a lordly object. Just so, this London. It is a vast, a glorious, a most imposing London, but thousands of its individuals in it are pressed and circumscribed to a few square yards and no more. Give me the open plain,—the new country, and then see if I do not put out a better head, and our children too."

Mrs. Tattenhall, now she felt that her husband was in earnest, sat motionless and confounded. The shock had come too suddenly upon her. Her husband, it is true, had often told her that things did not move as he wished; that they seemed fixed, and stereotyped, and stagnant; but then, when *are* merchants satisfied? She never had entertained an idea but that they should go on to the end of the chapter as they had been going on ever since she was married. She

was bound up heart and soul with her own country; she had her many friends and relations, with whom she lived on the most cordial terms; all her tastes, feelings, and ideas were English and metropolitan. At the very idea of quitting England, and for so new, and so distant a country, she was seized with an indescribable consternation.

"My dear Maria!" said her husband; "mind, I don't ask you to go at first. You and the children can remain here till I have been and seen what the place and prospects are like. My brother Sam will look after business—he will soon be at home in it—and if all is pleasant, why, you will come then, if not I won't ask you. I'll work out a good round sum myself if possible, or open up some connection that will mend matters here. What can I say more?"

"Nothing, dear Uriah, nothing. But those poor children——"

"Those poor children!" said Uriah. "Why my dear Maria, if you were to ask them whether they would like a voyage to Australia, to go and see those evergreen woods, and gallop about all amongst gay parrots, and great kangaroos, they would jump off their seats with joy. The spirits of the young are ever on the wing for adventure and new countries. It is the prompting of that Great Power which has constructed all this marvellous universe, and bade mankind multiply and replenish the earth. Don't trouble yourself about them. You saw how they devoured the adventures at the Cape, and you'll see how they will kindle up in a wonderful enthusiasm at the promise of a voyage to Australia. What are pantomimes to that?"

"Poor things!" said Mrs. Tattenhall. "They know nothing about the reality; all is fairyland and poetry to them."

"The reality! the reality, Maria, will be all fairyland and poetry to them."

Mrs. Tattenhall shook her head, and retired that night—not to sleep, but with a very sad heart to ruminate over this unexpected revelation. My brother's words were realised at the first mention of the project to the children. After the first shock of surprise and doubt whether it were really meant, they became unboundedly delighted. The end of it was, that by the middle of February, my brother Uriah, having had a handsome offer for his business and stock, had wound up all his affairs; and Mrs. Tattenhall having concluded, like a good wife and mother, to go with the whole family, they bade farewell to England, Mrs. Tattenhall with many tears, Uriah serious and thoughtful, the children full of delight and wonder at everything in the ship.

They had a fine voyage, though with very few passengers, for the captain said there was a temporary damp on the Australian colonies. The order of the Government at home to raise the upset price of land to one

pound per acre, had checked emigration, and as there had been a good deal of speculation in Melbourne in town allotments, things just now looked gloomy. This was in eighteen hundred and forty-three. "But it can't last long," said the Captain, "that silly order of raising the price of the land is so palpably absurd; while America is selling land so much nearer at a quarter of the price, that it must be repealed; and then all will be right again."

It was the middle of May when our party arrived in Hobson's Bay. It was very rainy, gloomy weather—the very opposite to all that the climate had been represented in the accounts sent home—but then it was the commencement of winter, the November of our season. Uriah got a boat, and sailed up the winding river to the town. The sail was through a flat tract of land densely overgrown with a mass of close, dark bushes, of some ten feet high, somewhat resembling our sloe-tree, the tea-tree of that country. On reaching the foot of the town, which stood on a range of low hills, Uriah and his companions stepped out into a most appalling slough of black mud, through which they waded till they reached the town, which was of no great extent, scattered over a considerable space, however, for the number of houses, and with great intervals of woodland, and of places where the trees had been felled, and where the stumps, a yard high, remained in unsightly nakedness.

Uriah walked on through a scene which, somehow in keeping with the weather, fell heavily on his spirits. There was nothing doing, or stirring; houses in various degrees of progress stood as they were. There were piles of timber, lime, shingles, posts, and rails, empty wagons and carts, but no people employed about them. On every hand he saw lots marked out for fencing or building upon, but there they remained all stationary.

"Is it Sunday?" Uriah asked himself. No, it was Tuesday. Then why all this stagnation; this solitude? In a lane, or rather deep track of mud and ruts, since known as Flinders' Lane, but then without a name, and only just wide enough between the trees for a cart to pass, Uriah wading and plunging along, the rain meantime pouring, streaming, and drumming down on his umbrella, he came face to face with a large active man in a mackintosh cloak, and an oilskin hood over his head. Neither of them found it very convenient to step out of the middle mud track, because on each side of it rose a perfect bank of sludge raised by the wheels of drays, and stopping to have a look at each other, the strange man suddenly put out a huge red hand warm and wet, and exclaimed:

"What! Tattenhall! You here! In the name of all wonders what could bring you here at this moment?"

"What, Robinson! is that you?" cried Uriah. "Is this your climate? This your paradise?"

"Climate—paradise—be hanged!" said Robinson. "They're well enough. If everything else were as well there would be nought to complain of. But tell me Uriah Tattenhall, with that comfortable Trumington Cottage at Peckham, with that well-to-do warehouse in the Old Jewry, what could possess you to come here?"

"What should I come for, but to settle?" asked Uriah, somewhat chagrined at this salutation.

"To settle! ha, ha!" burst out Robinson. "Well, as for that, you could not come to a better place. It is a regular settler here. Everything and everybody are settled here out and out. This is a settlement, and no mistake; but it is like a many other settlements, the figures are all on the wrong side the ledger."

"Good gracious!" said Uriah.

"Nay, it is neither good nor gracious," replied Robinson. "Look round. What do you see? Ruin, desertion, dirt and the—devil!"

"Why, how is that?" asked Uriah. "I thought you, and Jones, and Brown, and all of you had made your fortunes."

"So we had, or were just on the point of doing. We had purchased lots of land for building, and had sold it out again at five hundred per cent, when chop! down comes little Lord John with his pound an acre, and heigh, presto! everything goes topsyturvy. Our purchasers are either in the bankruptcy court, or have vanished. By jingo! I could show you such lots, fine lots for houses and gardens, for shops and warehouses; ay, and shops and warehouses upon them too, as would astonish you."

"Well, and what then?" asked Uriah.

"What then! why man don't you comprehend. Emigration is stopped, broken off as short as a pipe-shank, not a soul is coming out to buy and live in all these houses—not a soul except an odd—excuse me, Tattenhall, I was going to say, except you and another fool or two. But where do you hang out? Look! there is my house," pointing to a wooden erection near. "I'll come and see you as soon as I know where you fix yourself."

"But mind one thing," cried Uriah, seizing him by the arm as he passed. "For heaven's sake, don't talk in this manner to my wife. It would kill her."

"Oh no, mum's the word! There's no use frightening the women," said Robinson. "No, confound it, I won't croak any how. And, after all, bad as things are, why, they can't remain so for ever. Nothing ever does, that's one comfort. They'll mend sometime."

"When?" said Uriah.

"Well," said Robinson, pausing a little, "not before you and I meet again, so I may

leave that answer to another opportunity ;” and with a nod and very knowing look he stalked on.

“Odd fellow !” said my brother Uriah. “He is very jocose for a ruined man. What is one to think ?” and he waded on. After making a considerable circuit, and actually losing himself in the wood somewhere about where the Reverend Mr. Morrison’s chapel now stands in Collins’ Street, he again came across Robinson who stood at the door of a considerable erection of wattle-and-dab, that is, a building of boughs wattled on stakes, and dabbled over with mud ; then not uncommou in Melbourne, and still common enough in the bush. It stood on the hill-side with a swift muddy torrent produced by the rains rushing down the valley below it, towards the river, as it has often done since it bore the name of Swanston Street.

“Here, Tattenhall ! here is a pretty go !” shouted Robinson ; “a fellow has cut with bag and baggage to-night who owes me four thousand pounds, and has left me a lot more houses and land. That’s the way every day. But look, here is a house ready for you. You can’t have a better, and you can pay me any trifle you like, something is better than nothing.”

He led Uriah in. The house was thoroughly and comfortably furnished ; though, of course, very simply, with beds and everything. Uriah in less than a week, was safely established there, and had time to ramble about with his boys, and learn more fully the condition of the colony. It was melancholy beyond description. Wild, reckless speculation brought to a sudden close by the cessation of immigration, had gone like a hurricane over the place, and had left nothing but ruin and paralysis behind it. No words that Robinson had used, or that any man could use, could overpaint the real condition of prostration and of misery. Two hundred and eighty insolvencies in a population of ten thousand, told the tale of awful reality. Uriah was overwhelmed with consternation at the step he had taken. O ! how pleasant seemed that Trumpington Cottage, Peckham, and that comfortable warehouse in the Old Jewry, as he viewed them from the Antipodes in the midst of rain and ruin.

What, however, was my brother Uriah’s astonishment to see Robinson stalk in the next day, his tall figure having to stoop at every door, and in his brusque, noisy way, go up to Mrs. Tattenhall, and shaking her hand as you would shake the handle of a pump, congratulate her on her arrival in the colony.

“A lucky hit, madam, a most lucky, scientific hit ! Ah ! trust Tattenhall for knowing what he is about.”

Mrs. Tattenhall stood with a singular expression of wonder and bewilderment on her countenance, for the condition of the place, and the condolences of several female neighbours who had dropped in in Uriah’s absence,

had induced her to believe that they had made a fatal move of it.

“Why, sir,” said she, “what can you mean, for as I hear, the place is utterly ruined, and certainly it looks like it ?”

“Ruined ! to be sure it is, at least the people are, more’s the pity for me, and the like of me who have lost everything ; but for Tattenhall who has everything to gain, and money to win it with, why it is the golden opportunity, the very thing ! If he had watched at all the four corners of the world, and for a hundred years, he could not have dropped into such a chance. Ah ! trust Tattenhall, make me believe he did not plan it.” Thrusting his knuckles into Uriah’s side, and laughing with a thunder-clap of a laugh that seemed to come from lungs of leather.

“Why, look here now,” he continued, drawing a chair and seating himself on its front edge ; “look here now, if you had come six months ago, you could have bought nothing except out of the fire. Town allotments, land, houses, bread, meat, sugar, everything ten times the natural price : and, now ! cheap, dog cheap ! of no value at all, you might have them for asking for ; nay, I could go into a dozen deserted shops, and take any quantity for nothing. And property ! why three thousand pounds cash would almost buy all the place—all the colony.”

“What is the use,” asked Mrs. Tattenhall, “of buying a ruined colony ?”

“A ruined colony !” said Robinson, edging himself still more forward in his chair, and seeming actually to sit upon nothing, his huge figure and large ruddy face appearing still larger. “The colony, madam, is not ruined ; never was ruined, never can be ruined. The people are ruined, a good lot of them ; but the colony is a good and a grand colony. God made the colony, and let me tell you, madam,” looking very serious, “Providence is no speculator, up to-day, down to-morrow. What he does he does. Well, the people have ruined themselves ; but it is out of their power to ruin the colony ; no, nor the town. The town and the colony are sound as a bell, never were sounder, never had more stuff in them ; never had so much. There is the land still, not a yard of it is gone ; no great fellow has put that on his back and gone off with it. The land is there, and the houses, and the merchandise, and the flocks, and herds, and horses : and—what concerns you—”

He sat and looked at Mrs. Tattenhall, who stood there intently listening, and Uriah stood just behind her listening too, and all the children with their mouths open, gazing on the strange man.

“Well, what—what concerns us ?” said Mrs. Tattenhall.

“To get a huge, almighty heap of something for nothing,” said the large man,

stretching out his arms in a circular shape, as if he would enclose a whole globe, and in a low, slow, deep tone, calculated to sink deep into the imaginations of the listeners.

"If we did but know when things would mend;" said my brother Uriah, for the first time venturing to put in a word.

"When!" said Robinson starting up so suddenly that his head struck against a beam in the low one-storeyed house. "Confound these low places," said he, turning fiery red, and rubbing his crown, "there will be better anon. When? say ye? Hark ye! this colony is—how old? Eight years! and in eight years what a town! what wealth! what buildings! what a power of sheep and cattle! The place is knocked down, won't it get up again? Ay, and quickly! Here are a pair of sturdy legs," he said, turning to Bob, who flushed up in surprise; "but, Mrs. Tattenhall, you did not teach him to walk without a few tumbles, eh? But he got up again, and how he stands now! what a sturdy young rogue it is! And what made him get up again? Because he was young and strong, and the colony is young and strong, madam. Eight years old! What shall I give you for a three thousand pounds purchase made now, three years hence? Just think of that," said the tall man, "just turn that over a time or two," nodding solemnly to my brother, and then to my sister-in-law, and then cautiously glancing at the menacing beam, and with a low duck diving out of the house.

"What a strange fellow!" said Uriah.

"But how true!" said Mrs. Tattenhall.

"How true! What true?" asked Uriah, astonished.

"Why," said Mrs. Tattenhall, "what he says. It is truth, Uriah; we must buy as much as we can."

"But," said Uriah, "only the other day he said the clean contrary. He said everybody was ruined."

"And he says so still," added Mrs. Tattenhall, enthusiastically, "but not the colony. We must buy! We must buy, and wait. One day we shall reap a grand harvest."

"Ah!" said Uriah; "so you let yourself, my dear Maria, be thus easily persuaded, because Robinson wants to sell, and thinks we have money?"

"Is it not common sense, however? Is it not the plainest sense?" asked Mrs. Tattenhall. "Do you think this colony is never to recover?"

"Never is a long while," said Uriah. "But still—"

"Well, we will think it over, and see how the town lies; and where the chief points of it will be, probably, hereafter; and if this Mr. Robinson has any land in such places, I would buy of him, because he has given us the first idea of it."

They thought and looked, and the end of it was, that very soon they had bought up land

and houses, chiefly from Robinson, to the amount of two thousand pounds. Robinson fain would not have sold, but have mortgaged; and that fact was the most convincing proof that he was sincere in his expectations of a revival. Time went on. Things were more and more hopeless. Uriah, who had nothing else to do, set on and cultivated a garden. He had plenty of garden ground, and his boys helped him, and enjoyed it vastly. As the summer went on, and melons grew ripe, and there were plenty of green peas and vegetables, by the addition of meat, which was now only one penny a-pound, they could live almost for nothing; and Uriah thought they could wait and maintain themselves for years, if necessary. So, from time to time, one tale of urgent staring distress or another lured him on to take fresh bargains, till he saw himself almost penniless. Things still remained as dead as the very stones or the stumps around them. My brother Uriah began to feel very melancholy; and Mrs. Tattenhall, who had so strongly advised the wholesale purchase of property, looked very serious. Uriah often thought: "Ah! she *would* do it; but—Bless her! I will never say so, for she did it for the best." But his boys and girls were growing apace, and made him think. "Bless me! In a few years they will be shooting up into men and women; and if this speculation should turn out all moonshine!—if the place should never revive!"

He sate one day on the stump of a tree on a high ground, looking over the bay. His mind was in the most gloomy, dejected condition. Everything looked dark and hopeless. No evidence of returning life around; no spring in the commercial world; and his good money gone; as he sate thus, his eyes fixed on the distance, his mind sunk in the lowering present, a man came up, and asked him to take his land off his hands: to take it, for Heaven's sake, and save his starving family.

"Man!" said Uriah, with a face and a voice so savage that it made the suppliant start even in his misery, "I have no money! I want no land! I have too much land. You shall have it all for as much as will carry me back to England, and set me down a beggar there!"

The man shook his head. "If I had a single crown I would not ask you; but my wife is down of the fever, and my children are dying of dysentery. What shall I do? and my lots are the very best in the place."

"I tell you!" said my brother Uriah, with a fierce growl, and an angry flash of the eye, "I have no money, and how can I buy?"

He glanced at the man in fury; but a face so full of patient suffering and of sickness—sickness of the heart, of the soul, and, as it were, of famine, met his gaze, that he stopped short, felt a pang of remorse for his anger, and, pointing to a number of bullocks grazing in the valley below, he said, in a softened tone, "Look there! The other day a man

told me such a tale of horror—a sick family, and a gaol staring him in the face, that I gave him my last money—my carefully hoarded money, and of what use are those cattle to me? None whatever: You may have them for your land, if you like. I have nothing else.”

“I will have them,” said the man. “On a distant station I know where I could sell them, if I could only leave my family. But they have no flour, no tea, nothing but meat, meat, meat.”

“Leave them to me,” said Uriah, feeling the warm blood and the spirit of humanity beginning to circulate in his bosom at the sense of what was really suffering around him. “Leave them to me. I will care for them. Your wife and children shall have a doctor. I will find you some provisions for your journey, and if ever your land is worth anything, you shall have it again. This state of things makes monsters of us. It turns our blood into gall, our hearts into stones. We must resist it or we are ruined, indeed!”

“Nay,” said the man, “I won’t impose upon you. Take that piece of land in the valley there; it will one day be valuable.”

“That!” said Uriah, looking. “That! Why, that is a swamp! I will take that—I shall not hurt you there!” And he laughed outright, the first time for two years.

Years went on, and my brother Uriah lived on, but as it were in the valley of the shadow of death. It was a melancholy and dispiriting time. The buoyancy of his soul was gone. That jovial, sunny, ebullient spirit with which he used to come home from the city, in England, had fled, as a thing that had never been. He maintained himself chiefly out of his garden. His children were springing up into long, lanky lads and lasses. He educated them himself, as well as he could; and as for clothes! Not a navy—not a beggar—in the streets of London, but could have stood a comparison with them, to their infinite disparagement. Ah! those good three thousand pounds! How will the balance stand in my brother Uriah’s books at the end of the next twenty years?

But anon there awoke a slight motion in the atmosphere of life. It was a mere flutter of the air, that died out again. Then again it revived—it strengthened—it blew like a breath of life over the whole landscape. Uriah looked around him from the very place where he had sat on the stump in despair. It was bright and sunny. He heard a sound of an axe and a hammer. He looked, and saw a house, that had stood a mere skeleton, once more in progress. There were people passing to and fro with a more active air. What is that? A cart of goods? A dray of building materials. There was life and motion again! The discovery of converting sheep and oxen into tallow had raised the value of stock. The shops and the merchants

were once more in action. The man to whom he had sold the oxen came up smiling—

“Things mend, sir. We shall soon be all right. And that piece of land in the swamp, that you were so merry over, will you sell it? It lies near the wharves, and is wanted for warehouses.”

“Bravo!” cried Uriah, and they descended the hill together. Part of the land was sold; and soon substantial warehouses, of the native trapstone, were rising upon it. Uriah’s old attachment to a merchant’s life came over him. With the purchase-money he built a warehouse too. Labour was extremely low, and he built a large and commodious one.

Another year or two, and behold Uriah busy in his warehouse; his two boys clerking it gravely in the counting-house. Things grew rapidly better. Uriah and his family were once more handsomely clad, handsomely housed, and Uriah’s jolly humour was again in the ascendant. Every now and then Robinson came hurrying in, a very busy man indeed he was now, in the town council, and moreover, mayor; and saying, “Well, Mrs. Tattenhall, didn’t I say it, eh? Is not this boy of a colony on a fine sturdy pair of legs again? Not down? Not dead? Well, well, Tattenhall did me a kindness, then—by ready cash for my land—I don’t forget it; but I don’t know how I am to make him amends, unless I come and dine with him some day.” And he was off again.

Another year or two, and that wonderful crisis, the gold discovery, came. Then, what a sensation—what a stir—what a revolution! what running, and buying and bidding for land, for prime business situations!—what rolling in of people—capital—goods. Heaven and earth!—what a scene—what a place—what a people.

Ten years to a day from the last balance at the Old Jewry, Uriah Tattenhall balanced again, and his three thousand pounds was grown to seventy thousand pounds, and was still rolling up and on like a snow-ball.

There were George and Bob grown into really tall and handsome fellows. George was the able merchant, Bob had got a station out at the Dundenong-hills, and told wonderful stories of riding after kangaroos, and wild bulls, and shooting splendid lyre-birds—all of which came of reading Pringle’s Life in South Africa. There were Mary and Lucy, two handsome girls as any in the colony, and wonderfully attractive to a young Benson and a younger Robinson. Wonders were the next year to bring forth, and amongst them was to be a grand picnic at Bob’s station, at the Dundenong, in which they were to live out in real tents in the forest, and cook, and bake, and brew, and the ladies were to join in a bull-hunt, and shoot with revolvers, and nobody was to be hurt, or thrown, or anything to happen, but all sorts of merriment and wild-wood life.

And really my brother's villa on the Yarra River is a very fine place. The house is an Italian villa built of real stone, ample, with large, airy rooms, a broad verandah, and all in the purest taste. It stands on a high bank above the valley, in which the Yarra winds, taking a sweep there, its course marked by a dense body of acacia trees. In the spring these trees are of resplendent gold, loading the air with their perfume. Now they were thick and dark in their foliage, casting their shade on the river deep between its banks. From the house the view presented this deep valley with this curving track of trees, and beyond slopes divided into little farms, with their little homesteads upon them, where Uriah had a number of tenants making their fortunes on some thirty or forty acres each, by hay at forty pounds a ton, and potatoes and onions at one shilling a pound, and all other produce in proportion.

On this side of the river you saw extensive gardens in the hollow blooming with roses and many tropical flowers, and along the hill sides on either hand vineyards and fruit orchards of the most vigorous vegetation, and loaded with young fruit. The party assembled at my brother Uriah's house on that hospitable Christmas day, descended amid a native shrubbery, and Uriah thrust a walking-stick to its very handle into the rich black soil, and when his friends expressed their surprise, he told them that the soil there was fourteen feet deep, and would grow any quantity of produce for ages without manuring. Indeed, they passed through green corn of the most luxuriant character, and, crossing the bridge of a brook which there fell into the river, they found themselves under the acacias; by the river side there lay huge prostrate trunks of ancient gum-trees, the patriarchs of the forest, which had fallen and given place to the acacia, and now reminded the spectators that they were still in the land of primitive woods.

"Why, Tattenhall," said Robinson, to my brother Uriah, "Trumpington Cottage, my dear fellow, would cut a poor figure after this. I'd ask any lord or gentleman to show me a fatter or more desirable place in the tight little island. Bigger houses there may be, and are, but not to my mind more desirable. Do you know, very large houses always seem to me a sort of asylums for supernumerary servants—the master can only occupy a corner there—he cuts out quite small in the bulk. And as to fertility, this beats Battersea Fields and Fulham hollow. Those market-gardeners might plant and plant to all eternity, always taking out and never putting in, and if they could grow peaches, apricots, grapes, figs twice a year, and all that as fine in the open air as they do in hot-houses, and sell their bunches of parsley at sixpence a-piece, and water-melons—gathered from any gravel heap or dry open field—at five shillings a-piece,

plentiful as pumpkins, wouldn't they astonish themselves!

"But what makes you call this place Bowstead?" continued Robinson, breaking off a small wattle-bough to whisk the flies from his face. "Orr has named his Abbotsford—that's because he's a Scotchman; and we've got Cremorne Gardens, and Richmond, and Hawthorne, and all sorts of English names about here;—but Bowstead! I can't make it out."

"You can't?" said Uriah, smiling; "don't you see that the river curves in a bow here, and stead is a place?"

"O! that's it," said Robinson; "I fancied it was to remind you of Bow Bells."

"There you have it," said Bob, laughing. "Bow Bells! but, as there was a bow and no bells, my father put a stead to it, that's instead of the bells, you know."

"Bless me!" said Robinson: "now I should never have thought of that—how very clever!"

And he took the joke in such perfect simplicity, that all burst into a simultaneous laugh; for every one else knew that it was so called in honour of Maria Bowstead, now the universally respected Mrs. Tattenhall.

The whole party were very merry, for they had good cause to be. Mr. and Mrs. Tattenhall, still in their prime, spread out, enlarged every way, in body and estate, rosy, handsomely dressed, saw around them nothing but prosperity. A paradise of their own, in which they saw their children already developed into that manly and feminine beauty so conspicuous in our kindred of the south; their children already taking root in the land and twining their branches amongst those of other opulent families, they felt the full truth of Robinson's rude salutation, as he exclaimed, on coming to a fresh and more striking view of the house and grounds,—

"Ah! Tattenhall, Tattenhall!" giving him one of his jocose pokes in the side, "didn't I say you knew very well what you were about when you came here, eh? Mrs. Tattenhall, ma'am? Who said it? Robinson, wasn't it, eh?"

When they returned to the house, and had taken tea in a large tent on the lawn, and the young people had played a lively game of romps or bo-peep amongst the bushes of the shrubbery, with much laughter, the great drawing-room was lighted up, and very soon there was heard the sounds of violins and dancing feet. My brother Uriah and his wife were at that moment sitting under the verandah, enjoying the fresh evening air, the scent of tropical trees and flowers which stole silently through the twilight, and the clear, deep blue of the sky, where the magnificent constellations of Orion and the Scorpion were growing momentarily into their full nocturnal splendour. As the music broke out my brother Uriah affectionately pressed the hand of his wife, faithful and wise

and encouraging through the times of their difficulty and depression, and saying "Thank God for all this!" the pressure was as affectionately and gratefully returned. Then my brother and his wife rose up, and passed into the blaze of light which surrounded the gay and youthful company within.

THE BARMAID.

SHE was a pretty, gentle girl—a farmer's orphan daughter, and the landlord's niece—whom I strongly suspected of being engaged to be married very shortly, to the writer of the letter that I saw her reading at least twenty times, when I passed the bar, and which I more than believe I saw her kiss one night. She told me a tale of that country which went so pleasantly to the music of her voice, that I ought rather to say it turned itself into verse, than was turned into verse by me.

A little past the village
The inn stood, low and white,
Green shady trees behind it,
And an orchard on the right,
Where over the green paling
The red-cheeked apples hung,
As if to watch how wearily
The sign-board creaked and swung.

The heavy-laden branches
Over the road hung low,
Reflecting fruit or blossom
In the wayside well below ;
Where children, drawing water,
Looked up and paused to see,
Amid the apple branches,
A purple Judas Tree.

The road stretch'd winding onward
For many a weary mile—
So dusty footsore wanderers
Would pause and rest awhile ;
And panting horses halted,
And travellers loved to tell
The quiet of the wayside inn,
The orchard, and the well.

Here Maurice dwelt ; and often
The sunburnt boy would stand
Gazing upon the distance,
And shading with his hand
His eyes, while watching vainly
For travellers, who might need
His aid to loose the bridle,
And tend the weary steed.

And once (the boy remember'd
That morning many a day—
The dew lay on the hawthorn,
The bird sang on the spray)
A train of horsemen, nobler
Than he had seen before,
Up from the distance gallopp'd,
And paused before the door.

Upon a milk-white pony,
Fit for a faery queen,
Was the loveliest little damsel
His eyes had ever seen ;

A servant-man was holding
The leading rein, to guide
The pony and its mistress
Who cantered by his side.

Her sunny ringlets round her
A golden cloud had made,
While her large hat was keeping
Her calm blue eyes in shade ;
One hand held firm the silken reins
To keep her steed in check,
The other pulled his tangled mane,
Or stroked his glossy neck.

And as the boy brought water,
And loosed the rein, he heard
The sweetest voice, that thank'd him
In one low gentle word ;
She turned her blue eyes from him,
Look'd up, and smiled to see
The hanging purple blossoms
Upon the Judas Tree.

And show'd it with a gesture,
Half pleading, half command,
Till he broke the fairest blossom,
And laid it in her hand ;
And she tied it to her saddle
With a ribbon from her hair,
While her happy laugh rang gaily,
Like silver on the air.

But the champing steeds were rested—
The horsemen now spur'd on,
And down the dusty highway
They vanish'd and were gone.
Years pass'd, and many a traveller
Paused at the old inn-door,
But the little milk-white pony
And the child return'd no more.

Years pass'd, the apple branches
A deeper shadow shed ;
And many a time the Judas Tree,
Blossom and leaf lay dead ;
When on the loitering western breeze
Came the bells' merry sound,
And flowery arches rose, and flags
And banners waved around.

And Maurice stood expectant,
The bridal train would stay
Some moments at the inn-door,
The eager watchers say ;
They come—the cloud of dust draws near—
'Mid all the state and pride,
He only sees the golden hair
And blue eyes of the bride.

The same, yet, ah ! still fairer,
He knew the face once more
That bent above the pony's neck
Years past at the inn-door :
Her shy and smiling eyes look'd round,
Unconscious of the place—
Unconscious of the eager gaze
He fix'd upon her face.

He pluck'd a blossom from the tree—
The Judas Tree—and cast
Its purple fragrance towards the bride,
A message from the Past.