

here. Rajah an' I can get better accommodation there an' cheaper'n here. Good-bye.

'Good-bye. Good luck, too!'

Grenville averted his face hastily, after they had gripped hands, and crossed quickly back to the cages.

Over at the cook's waggon, Grayson got a swig or two, and walked on slowly out across the fields, beyond the canvases and towards the west. Every sensibility the man possessed, whatever its crudeness or narrowness or inefficiency, had awakened. With little realisation of how it had come about or what end it presaged, but with the bitter, unreasoning sense of the injustice of the moment, he faced the crisis—the great crisis—of his life.

The sun, a clean-cut globe of fire, was plunging out of sight behind the hills. Blue and gold painted the sky at the zenith. It was a scene, calm, tranquil, lapsing more and more rapidly into a direct antithesis of the turbulence of the morning.

Unexpectedly, as he stood there, came to him a dull suggestion of the incongruity of this peaceful closing of the day with the wild storm that had broken upon his own life. With the sun's coming up again, he would be an outcast, driven into exile from the world he loved; holding to the old life only through the desolate hope that Rajah might somewhere find another place, and so bring him back to the old, old fascination of the canvases.

There was no other way. The parks and permanent gardens in the cities he had abhorred always for their monotony, their insufferable sameness. In his eyes they stood for the very sloth of stagnancy. The thought of separation from Rajah hurt him, too, like a knife-thrust. And yet, with the elephant blind, helpless, unable adequately to be cared for in the clockwork regime of the circus—

A dull explosion, like a muffled shot, burst suddenly from the direction of the canvases at his back. He wheeled about instantly his eyes straining to discover

what had happened, his nostrils quivering with the acute misgiving that an animal feels in sudden fright.

For the merest fraction of a minute he saw nothing. Then, like a surging billow of fire, flames leaped up from one of the white tents. Their simultaneous outbreak from every part of the canvas told him all that he need know. The huge paraffin-tank for the stoves in the cook's quarters had exploded, scattering the burning oil far and near over the top and sides of the adjoining dressing-tent.

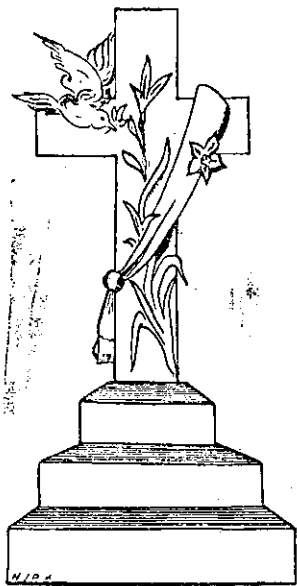
There was no time to hesitate or consider. Forgetting in that very instant all his outraged feelings, injustices which had been heaped upon him by the man whose property was blazing before his eyes, and driven only by that instinct which, on that other night, had whipped him back again and again to the wrecked menagerie-car, he dashed with the speed of regained youth straight towards the menagerie quarters.

He reached the tent, gasping. Hiccupless of everything save the big elephant, he bent down, and with fingers which in his blind haste fumbled clumsily with the rings, loosened the chain from the stake. Then, with a reckless leap, he landed on Rajah's startled head, and began urging him with a precipitate rush of words out of the tent.

Half-sitting, half-clinging to the mammoth ears of the animal, Grayson drove straight through the blur of shouting, frantically-gesticulating circus-hands—straight on towards the blazing canvas. The flames were shooting high in the air now; every second found them flaring up in new places.

'Good boy, Rajah—good old fellow! Shake it out! Shake it out!'

It was Grayson's voice, rising above the hiss and roar of the fire—cool, strong, imperious, yet intreating; commanding, yet never threatening. Man and elephant were abreast the fiery wall now, and Rajah's trunk, guided uncertainly by his half-sightless eyes, reached up obediently to the burning canvas.



John Crombie

—SCULPTOR—

Manufacturer and Direct Importer of Monuments, Headstones, Altars, Founts, and Marble Tops.

Statuary, Vases, and all other classes of Work suitable for the Cemetery and Building Trade in any design.

Inscriptions cut in Cemetery. Imperishable Lead Letters. Workmanship, Quality and Prices unequalled.

GRANITE & MARBLE WORKS,
RIBBLE ST.
(opp. Railway Station) **AMARU.**

**SPECIAL RING OFFER
TO 'TABLET' READERS**

... AT ...

**GOLDSMITH'S HALL,
226 COLOMBO STREET,
CHRISTCHURCH.**

S. R. WHALE having over 20 years' experience in Ring making, is recognised as being the RING LEADER of the RING TRADE in Christchurch.

The advantages of dealing DIRECT with a MANUFACTURING FIRM must obviously prove MOST ADVANTAGEOUS to Purchasers.

Here are a few of our Prices—



Sapphires and Diamond
£7 10s.



Beautiful Pearl
£5 10s.



18ct Wedding Ring
30s.



18ct Buckle
(Extra Heavy) **40s.**

SPECIAL—

To purchasers of Engagement Rings a Special Discount of 20 per cent. allowed. One dozen Silver Spoons given free to purchasers of a Wedding Ring. Size card sent free to any address.

S. R. WHALE
GOLDSMITH'S HALL,
CHRISTCHURCH.

Tanfield, Potter and Co.

242 QUEEN STREET.



CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

OUR SPECIALTY—WEDDING GIFTS.

Readers of this paper are invited to inspect our Fine Stock of China, Glass Ornaments, and Fancy Goods.

Our Goods are the Best.
Our Prices the Lowest.

The Most Up-to-Date Stock in the Dominion.