

# By the 'Frisco.

FROM "ALIEN."

"TOM GALLON."

KNOWING that New Zealand readers would be interested in a few personal notes regarding a novelist who has come so quickly and securely to public favour, I requested "Tom Gallon's" photograph and a brief outline of his method of work for publication in THE ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. He kindly responded, and feeling that his letter would be spoilt by re-writing, I subjoin it in its original text:—

"I find that you have set me a far more difficult task than I anticipated; for I cannot write anything concerning myself, or my work, without a somewhat large flavouring of apparent egotism, which must appear distasteful. However, I beg that you will regard the fact that I am writing at your request.

"First, then, let me say that I never write a single line, in the actual sense of pen-and-ink work; that bad health compels me to be a very lazy man; and that I work at high pressure, and at odd times, by strolling about my room, pipe in mouth, dictating to a typist. Perhaps I should add that this part of my work is, in reality, the smallest and the most easy; for, long before I am able to reach the stage at which I can start to reel off the story, I have to wander about streets or country lanes, with the idea simmering in my head, or even to dream about it in certain wakeful hours at night. Perhaps your readers will also be interested in knowing that I take every single character—even to dress, and appearance, and gesture—from actual life; although, of course, for fictional purposes, I place them in different situations to those actually occupied by them in the world. Thus, the renowned Mrs. Kotley, who figured so largely as Kiddy's benefactress, stepped almost out of the living frame she occupied as a charwoman who waited upon me in certain dingy chambers in Grays' Inn; and poor Kiddy herself I had the audacity to follow home one bleak night through the streets of London, what time she told Mr. Deak, I suppose, something of her troubles. The young artist, who gave his heart to the Ella Tarrant, of *Tatterley*, has carried his blushing, boyish face into my rooms many a time, and unconsciously sat for his portrait, and Ella

herself never cut me to the heart quite so deeply as when she broke it in marrying him.

"For the rest, I know probably as much of the East End of this great and wonderful London, and of that curious language which is a part of it, as any man who walks its streets, and I don't think I ever met the man, woman, or child yet that had not a story to tell me.

In all kindness,

Believe me to be,

Always sincerely yours,

TOM GALLON."

"Kiddy" is the nickname of the heroine of the story, who is placed in the home of a sharp money-lender, one of those characters which the gifted author depicts so well, and which are particularly the product of a large city. Kiddy it is who gets at the tender



J. Caswall Smith,

TOM. GALLON.

Oxford St. W.

spot of this hard heart, and with sweetness and love wins what is left there of kindness and trust. One of the reviews of this book