

The Powers of Persuasion.

BY G. B. LANCASTER.

Illustrated by W. Wright and E. B. Vaughan.

DOLLY FANCOURT was in disgrace, and this was not entirely an unprecedented thing; for Dolly upon many occasions had come to issues with his world not having arrived, at the understanding that to do good in his own eyes was not the one thing needed to make of his world a paradise of peace and order, and Dolly's awakening had been delayed over-long.

So said the members of the Te Utu Club, it was to them that Dolly had to answer for his present iniquity. Nor was it the manner of men like Seamore and Burke to let an offender down lightly—even when the offender was Dolly Fancourt.

Dolly was a pink and white youth with a soft voice, a great want of respect for those in authority, and a great deal more money than was good for him. He also possessed a wide knowledge of many strange things picked up in the days before he and his brother bought a run in South Canterbury and established themselves thereon.

His friends said that Dolly's alphabet consisted of a capital I and a small u. His enemies said that he had only two ideas in his head, the first was Dolly Fancourt, and the second was Dolly Fancourt. But inasmuch as he had both friends and enemies he was as well off as a man need be on this earth.

The thing that set the Te Utu Club in a blaze was very simple, and this was the way it happened.

Dolly spent many of his days and nights in Tairua, which, though it is not a cathedral city, nor yet the seat of Government, is writ upon the map in large letters, and upon the hearts of the inhabitants in larger letters still.

Bar-rooms and ball-rooms alike where Dolly's trodden paths, and the Te Utu Club his city of refuge.

It was on a certain night in midsummer that Dolly put himself outside the pale of civilization and the Te Utu Club.

Proceedings opened when he met two of the club men by the corner of the New South Wales Bank which fronts the wharves and the long stretch of wind-beaten shore. Dolly's attire was immaculate. There was a flower in his button-hole.



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