

# MR. T. J. COLLINS,

## DENTAL SURGEON,

(Ten Years' London experience.)

### 82 PRINCES STREET, DUNEDIN.

(3 doors above G. & T. Young, Jewellers.)

Neal looked at Jo, and Jo looked at Neal. Both knew that the non-arrival of the meat meant short commons for at least a week, unless—but, no! they had given up hoping. They really believed that there was not a single fish in the river.

At length Jo said, in a very subdued voice: "Well, it can't be helped; but we shall have nothing for dinner, that's very certain." "No," said Neal despairingly; "I am afraid not." Then, with grim playfulness, he added: "We can look forward to a new experience—the experience of hunger. One reads about it in books of travel, but I can't say that I know much about the sensation. Do you?"

"No," answered Jo, somewhat ruefully, "for as long as I can recollect, I have always had three good meals a day." "We have not even any tinned stuff with us," he remarked regretfully.

"No; we made so sure of catching plenty of fish, that we did not think it necessary to bring any stores." "Then," said Neal, with a kind of desperate calm, "we must starve." His voice was terrible to hear. It was full of unutterable woe.

Jo made no reply. For a time she sat buried in thought. At length a smile broke over her face, and she crept softly from the room.

"Where are you going?" he inquired. "I'm going to try to get something to eat," she responded. "It's no use sitting here with our hands folded, and not making an effort." "But, Jo, what can you do?" And he glanced at her sceptically.

"I don't know. Neal, dear, will you lend me your big rod? I have learnt to cast pretty fairly, and I promise faithfully not to harm it." He burst into a derisive laugh. It was was the first time since their marriage that any tone of his had jarred on her sensitive ear. "Ha, ha!" he exclaimed. "How truly ridiculous! and I warn you that you propose going on a wild-geese chase. Why, Jo, you silly little woman, I have whipped every pool until I am sick of the sight of water; and if I can't catch a salmon, you won't; you may make up your mind to that. With the river so low and clear as it is at present, you have not the ghost of a chance."

"Perhaps not," answered Jo, humbly; though her lips closed over her white teeth in a curiously determined fashion, for she was not one of those who give in easily. "Still there is no harm in trying. My theory is, if you don't try, you don't get." So saying she marched towards the door, not impervious to his ridicule, though bent on rising above it. On the threshold she paused and hesitated. "Won't you come with me, Neal, dear," she said, persuasively.

The papers had just arrived from England, and he was busy reading the Home news. If the small boy had brought no food for the body, he had at least brought food for the mind, and Neal was devouring it with the appetite of a man far from his native shores. "No," he answered carelessly, "it's not good enough; it's only a waste of time flogging the pools until we get rain. He spoke rather brusquely; for if the truth must be told, what with his non-success and the prospect of no dinner, he was thoroughly put out; and superior beings as men may be, very few of them are proof against minor discomforts. Anyhow, Neal was undeniably cross, and, as Jo's experience of his present mood was novel, she looked at him for a moment in surprise. A ray of sunshine came pouring in at the window, and lighted full on her small, oval face. It was so bright that it made her eyes glisten. She turned away without another word, and he could hear the nails in her thick shooting boots c'anking against the wooden ladder as she cautiously descended it.

Jo had not been gone above twenty minutes, when his conscience began to smite him. The room seemed lonely in her absence. He missed the sound of her voice, the sense of companionship conferred by her presence. After all, there was nothing in the newspapers, and he could read them some other time. He did not take such a vital interest in Mr Gladstone's orations but what their perusal might be deferred for an hour or so. He was sorry he had spoken rudely, and told himself he was a brute not to have accompanied Jo to the river, when she had asked him so nicely and prettily. Many women in her place might have wined and grumbled at the reverse of fortune. Some would have turned freiful, others would have gone to bed with a sick headache, or shed weak tears of self pity. Jo had done none of these foolish, feminine things, but, like a brave, sensible girl, she directed her energies towards remedying the evil. It was not her fault, poor little woman, if her power to do so was slight. As he thought of her many qualities his heart grew soft, and she was perfectly right, and set him a good example. It did not do to give in. She was slight and frail, while he was strong, and did not know

the meaning of the word fatigue. It was for him to make another effort to supply the table, not her. Thus thinking, he rose from the horse-hair couch, on which he had been reposing his lordly limbs, and sauntered in the direction of the river. Merciful heavens! What was that? In an instant his indolence deserted him. He heard a scream, another and another.

It was Jo's voice calling for help. His heart stood still, then thumped violently against his ribs. Had she missed her footing? Was she drowning? Good heavens! and to think that he had refused to go with her. If anything were the matter, he should never forgive himself. He bounded like a chamois over the rocky ground, and, running at all speed, arrived in the nick of time to see Jo, dressed in his big wading boots, and up to her waist in water, battling with a magnificent salmon. The fish leapt clean out of the water as he approached, and could not have been less than thirty pounds. The little bride's face was hot and flushed, great beads of perspiration stood on her brow. She was slightly made, and the strain on her physical powers seemed almost more than they could withstand. At best, Jo was but a frail little thing, with small bones and tiny hands; but her spirit was high.

When she perceived Neal, a look of intense relief passed over her countenance.

"Oh!" she gasped. "I'm so glad you've come. I could not have held on much longer. My arms ache so, and I hardly know what to do."

"How long has he been on?" asked Neal, in a state of fierce excitement.

"For ages and ages. I hooked him at the very third cast. Do you know what I did, Neal?" with a triumphant smile. "I gave out ever such a lot of line, and let it float down the stream; and then I wound it up very gently and slowly; when lo! all of a sudden I felt an enormous tug. Then, whirr, whirr went the reel. I was afraid I should have no line left, and jumped into the water, and ran over the stones as hard as I could. I must have run quite half a mile from first to last. But, oh!" giving a sigh of fatigue, "it was such hard work! Once I fell head over heels, and nearly lost the rod altogether. You see I am wet through. However, I held on like grim death, for your words kept ringing in my ears, 'We must starve, we must starve, we must starve,' and I vowed that we shouldn't, if I could help it. But, oh! Neal, please make haste and take the rod; for I'm tired out."

Nothing loath, he did as desired, and Jo proceeded to stretch her strained arms, and to straighten her weary back, which ached intolerably. The fish was pretty well spent, and directly he felt a strong hand on him, showed symptoms of giving in.

"Run, Jo, run!" Neal called out, "and tell Lars to bring the gaff at once. It is hanging up close to the door in the loft."

She flew at his bidding, first divesting herself, however, of the big boots. In five minutes she returned, accompanied by Lars, who seemed to consider it a personal insult that a fish should have been taken in his absence. The salmon made one or two last runs, but they were both short and feeble, and before long Neal towed him out of the current into a comparatively shallow bay.

"Come, Jo," he said, turning to his wife, "this is your fish, and you deserve the honour of bringing him to bank."

Whereupon Josephine once more grasped the rod in her small hands. Lars took off his shoes and stockings and stole into the water, crouching like a tiger ready to spring. He watched his opportunity, and, when it came, with a quick, sure thrust of the gaff he secured the prize. And a prize, indeed, the captive proved, for a finer salmon never was seen. His sides were clean and bright, and shone like silver. He was in the pink of condition—broad, with a beautiful small head, and the sea-hoe still clung to him with tenacious affection. He had taken the fly ravenously; the hook was imbedded far down in his throat, and Lars had to cut it out with a big knife. Then Neal whipped out a weighing machine and proceeded to weigh him.

"By Jove! little woman," he exclaimed. "you have distinguished yourself, and no mistake. Guess what he weighs." "Fifteen pounds," said Jo, at hazard, not having any notion as to the real size of her capture.

"Nonsense, you're awfully wide of the mark. What do you say to thir y-two pounds and three-quarters, eh? Here's hip, hip, hip, burrah for the female sex. Abuse it as we like, it manages to score