

**THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY:
A NOVEL, IN THREE
VOLUMES; VOL. I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649261116

The golden butterfly: a novel, in three volumes; Vol. I by Sir Walter Besant & James Rice

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

SIR WALTER BESANT & JAMES RICE

**THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY:
A NOVEL, IN THREE
VOLUMES; VOL. I**

THE
GOLDEN BUTTERFLY.

A Novel.

BY THE AUTHORS OF

'READY-MONEY MORTIBOY,' 'THIS SON OF VULCAN,' 'MY LITTLE GIRL,'
'WITH HARP AND CROWN,' 'THE CASE OF MR. LUCKRAFT,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8 CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

1876.

[All rights reserved.]

Tacopa Johnson, 11 mos. 1952

823
B 469
1876
v. 1

THE
GOLDEN BUTTERFLY.

Prologue.

I.

‘WHAT do you think, chief?’

The speaker, who was leading by half a length, turned in his saddle and looked at his companion.

‘Push on,’ growled the chief, who was a man of few words.

‘If you were not so intolerably conceited about the value of your words—hang it, man, you are not the Poet Laureate!—you might give your reasons why we should not camp where we are. The sun will be down in two hours; the way is long, the wind is cold, or will be soon. This pilgrim has tightened his belt to stave off the gnawing at his stomach; here is running water, here is wood, here

Gr. no. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

is everything calculated to charm the poetic mind even of Captain Ladds—'

'Road!' interrupted his fellow-traveller, pointing along the track marked more by deep old wheel-ruts, grown over with grass, than by any evidences of engineering skill. 'Roads lead to places; places have beds; beds are warmer than grass—no rattlesnakes in beds; miners in hotels—amusing fellows, miners.'

'If ever I go out again after buffaloes, or bear, or mountain-deer, or any other game whatever which this great continent offers, with a monosyllabic man, may I be condemned to another two months of buffalo steak without Worcester sauce, such as I have had already; may I be poisoned with bad Bourbon whisky; may I never again see the sweet shady side of Pall Mall; may I—'

Here he stopped suddenly, for want of imagination to complete the curse.

The first speaker was a young man of four-and-twenty—the age which is to my sex what eighteen is to the other, because at four-and-twenty youth and manhood meet. He of four-and-twenty is yet a youth, inasmuch as women are still angels, every dinner is a feast, every man of higher rank is a demigod, and every book is true. He is a man, inasmuch as

he has the firm step of manhood, he has passed through his calf-love, he knows what claret means, and his heart is set upon the things of which boys care nothing. He is a youth, because he can still play a game of football and rejoice amazingly in a boat-race; he is a man, because he knows that these things belong to the past, and that to concern oneself seriously with athletics when you can no longer be an athlete in the games is to put yourself on the level of a rowing coach or the athletic critic of a sporting-paper.

Being only four-and-twenty, the speaker was in high spirits. He was also hungry. He was always both. What has life better to offer than a continual flow of animal spirits and a perpetual appetite? He was a tall, slight, and perhaps rather a weedy youth, a little too long of leg, a little too narrow in the beam, a little spare about the shoulders; but a youth of a ruddy and a cheerful countenance. To say that the lines of his face were never set to gravity would be too much, because I defy any man to laugh when he is sleeping, eating, or drinking. At all other times this young man was ready to laugh without stopping. Not a foolish cackle of idiotic vacuity such as may be heard in Earlswood Asylum, or at a tea-party to meet the curate; but a cheerful bubble of mirth and

good-humour, proof that the spirit within took everything joyously, seeing in every misadventure its humorous side, and in every privation its absurdity.

The other who rode beside him was some years older at least. A man of thirty-five, or perhaps more; a man with a hatchet-face—nose and forehead in one straight line; long chin and long upper lip in another; face red with health as well as bronzed with the sun; a good honest face, supernaturally grave, grave beyond all understanding; lips that were always tightly closed; eyes which sometimes sparkled in response to some genial thought, or bubbled over at some joke of his companion, but which as a rule were like gimlets for sternness, so that strangers, especially stranger servants—the nigger of Jamaica, the guileless Hindoo of his Indian station, and other members of the inferior human brotherhood—trembled exceedingly when they met those eyes. Captain Ladds was accordingly well served, as cold reserved men generally are. Mankind take everything unknown *pro terribili*, for something dreadful, and until we learn to know a man, and think we know him, he is to be treated with the respect due to a possible enemy. *Hostis* means a stranger, and it is for strangers that we keep our brickbats.

People who knew Ladds laughed at this reputation. They said the gallant captain was a humbug; they pretended that he was as gentle as a turtle-dove; beneath those keen eyes, they said, and behind that sharp hatchet-face lurked the most amiable of dispositions. At any rate, Ladds was never known to thrash a native servant, or to swear more than is becoming and needful at a syce, while his hatchet-face had been more than once detected in the very act of looking as soft and tender as a young mother's over her first-born. The name of this cavalier was short and simple. It was Thomas Ladds. His intimate friends called him Tommy.

They were in California, and were not buffalo-hunting now, because there is not a buffalo within five hundred miles of Sacramento. Their buffalo-hunting was over, having been accompanied by such small hardships as have been already alluded to. They rode along a track which was as much like a road as Richmond Park is like the Forest of Arden. They were mounted on a pair of small nervous mustangs; their saddles were the Mexican saddles used in the country, in front of which was the never-failing horn. Round this was wound the horsehair lariatte, which serves the Western Nimrod for lassoing by day and for keeping off snakes at night, no