

**GEORGE  
AND SON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649592609

George and Son by Edward H. Cooper

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**EDWARD H. COOPER**

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AND SON**



George and Son

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By

Edward H. Cooper

AUTHOR OF "MR. BLAKE OF NEWMARKET," "THE MONK WINS,"  
"A FOOL'S YEAR," ETC.



London

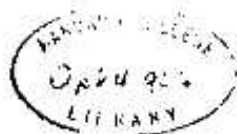
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# George and Son

## CHAPTER I.

"THE worst of me," said Sir Henry Spencer, "is that I have no principle. My practices are none of them vicious ; in effect I have no vices at all ; but the mischief of the thing is that when some moral question turns up, and I have got to do something about it, I have no reason for doing one thing more than another. Questions of that sort, of course, don't turn up once a year unless you go about looking for them, but when they do I am stumped. I have acquired a peaceful conscience, which never does me any harm, but, on the other hand, is no good in an emergency. The Vicar says I have no rudder, and next day he says I have no anchor, and next day he says my life will end in a wreck ; but really, ships apart, I do feel sometimes as if something was wrong. Take my brother George and his son. Look at them. Study them. I suppose a more

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unspeakable pair of scamps never walked ; and if I had principles, anchors, rudders, masthead lights, or anything else you like in that line, I should know exactly what to do. I should cut them dead, forbid Peggy and Nancy to speak to them, refuse to lend them a penny, and get the boy blackballed at my club, for which, by the way, he has just had the infernal impudence to put up. Mind you vote for him. What, in fact, am I really doing? George and the boy come here whenever they like, and I dine with them every time I go up to town. I lend them fifty pounds whenever they ask for it, and Peggy and Nancy and I sit and roar with laughter half the time they are here. The Vicar says that if I refused to speak to them or lend them a penny nobody else would, and that they would have to take their choice between turning respectable or starving ; but I doubt if he knows his facts. Men of that sort always go on living ; it is one of the few advantages of the publicity of modern life that you simply can't starve nowadays. Also I doubt whether George would so certainly choose the respectability if he were really confronted with the two alternatives. You know him well, my dear Trevor, don't you? Can you imagine him respectable?"