

**TALES FROM "BLACKWOOD": BEING
THE MOST FAMOUS SERIES OF STORIES
EVER PUBLISHED ESPECIALLY SELECTED
FROM THAT CELEBRATED ENGLISH
PUBLICATION, SERIES II, VOL. II**

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Tales from "Blackwood": Being the Most Famous Series of Stories Ever Published Especially Selected from That Celebrated English Publication, Series II, Vol. II by H. Chalmers Roberts

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H. CHALMERS ROBERTS

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"YOU'VE BEEN TOOK IN, MARY"
See page 40

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"BLACKWOOD"

Being the most Famous Series
of Stories ever Published
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Celebrated English Publication

Selected by

H. CHALMERS ROBERTS

Illustrations by JESS. EMILY BRANGS



BOSTON
The New England Society
1910

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TALES FROM "BLACKWOOD."

COUSIN JOHN'S PROPERTY.

"ON the 11th ult., at Point de Galle, Ceylon, on the voyage home, John Simpson, Esq., her Majesty's Consul at Tranquebar."

"Bless my life, Sally," said Mr Simpson, almost choking himself with his muffin, "here's cousin John dead!"

Mr Simpson had the 'Times' for an hour every morning (at sixpence per week), and that hour being his breakfast allowance also, he read and ate against time, taking a bite of muffin, a sip of tea, and a glance at the paper alternately; and as he was very short-sighted, and always in a hurry, there seemed imminent risk sometimes of his putting the paper into his mouth instead of the muffin.

"You don't mean to say so, Simpson," said the lady on the other side of the little fireplace.

"Cousin John dead! Why, he was to be in town next month—it's impossible! Where do it say so?"

And she made an attempt to reach across for the paper; but it was a long stretch, and Mrs Simpson was stout, and hardly made due allowance for that fact in her instructions to her staymaker; so Mr Simpson found himself master of the position, and proceeded to read the announcement again, with a proper sense of importance. Miss Augusta Simpson, and her brother, Master Samuel, who occupied the seats at the other side of the family breakfast-table, had risen from their places, and with their mouths and eyes open, and Master Samuel's knife arrested in a threatening position, formed rather a striking tableau.

"Then that Surrey property comes to us, Mr S.," exclaimed the lady, as she left her arm-chair, and made good her hold on one side of the 'Times,' of which her husband still pertinaciously retained possession.

"It comes to me, my dear, as next heir, by uncle Sam's will—no doubt of it." If Mr Simpson intended a little gentle self-assertion in this speech, it was so unusual with him, that Mrs Simpson was good enough not to notice it.

"It's worth two or three thousand a-year, Simpson, isn't it?"

"About one thousand, or fourteen hundred at

most, my dear, as I have told you before," replied the husband. "It's a very nice property. Dear me! poor John! only to think! that he should never have come home to enjoy it!" and the good-natured Mr Simpson gave an honest sigh to the memory of his departed cousin, and for a moment forgot his own accession of fortune.

"Well, well, life's uncertain with all of us. I never thought as you'd have outlived him, Simpson; he was ten years younger than you, if he were a day. I did think it might have been our Samuel's in days to come, supposing John died without children, as was always likely from what I heard of him. I often did say to myself I hoped Sammy might be a gentleman."

Samuel wiped his lips in preparation for that crisis. He had been eating a second egg surreptitiously and hastily. Only a mother's eyes could have detected the future gentleman under the pinafore at that moment. "There's the 'bus, father," he shouted, jumping up with the view of effecting a diversion from his own operations; "there's the 'bus coming round!"

Mr Simpson rose mechanically, and dropped the 'Times.' The habits of twenty years were not to be shaken even by the sudden prospect of a thousand a-year. But his daughter, with the spirit of a true British maiden in the hour of fortune, showed herself equal to the occasion.