

**MARK WESTCROFT,
CORDWAINER: A
VILLAGE STORY**

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Mark Westcroft, Cordwainer: A Village Story by F. Scarlett Potter

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BY

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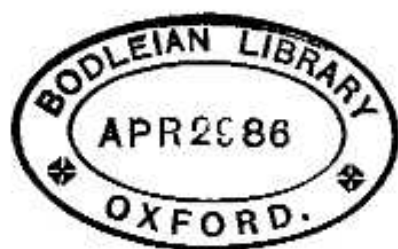
AUTHOR OF 'HEROES OF THE NORTH,' 'AMBROSE GRAY,' ETC.



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MARK WESTCROFT.

CHAPTER I.

AN ADVENTURE ON THE RAIL.

IT was one of the great London railway stations, and a train was about to start. All was bustle and confusion on the crowded platform. The porters were too busy to attend to passengers who looked unlikely to pay them for their trouble, and among these latter was a poor woman, who, with a child on one arm, a load of packages on the other, and a second child clinging to her skirts, was trying to make her way to a third-class carriage. Encumbered as she was, it was no easy matter for her to push her way through the crowd, nor was she very successful.

She was still some little distance from the door of the carriage, when the string which held her parcels together gave way, and they were scattered around her. She stood in hopeless bewilderment, and began to cry.

In a third-class compartment, opposite to the spot where this little accident took place, the nearest corner seats were occupied by two men. One of these was smartly dressed, and wore a heavy gold albert chain and a big ring. His features were somewhat red and coarse; he was evidently what in plain English would be termed a "betting-man," but who would probably have styled himself a "sporting gentleman." To him the woman's misfortune seemed to afford considerable amusement, for he laughed heartily.

The passenger opposite to him, though not in his working-dress, was plainly a young mechanic. He was a pleasant, intelligent-looking young man, whose age might perhaps be slightly under twenty. It might have been observed that he did not join in his neighbour's laugh. He did not even smile. Instead of amusement, he felt only sympathy for the poor woman under her trouble. Had he possessed the same familiarity with the world and ready assurance as his fellow-passenger, he would on the instant