

**UNSETTLED FOR  
LIFE, OR, WHAT  
SHALL I BE?**

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Unsettled for Life, Or, What Shall I Be? by Harry Jones

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## WHAT SHALL I BE?

BY

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## UNSETTLED FOR LIFE;

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### CHAPTER I.

"My dear John," said Miss Priscilla, looking up from her desk, "I wish you would not wipe your pen on your sleeve."

"Why not, aunt?" he replied; "I have a black coat on; besides, it is such a bore to do it on a regular wiper—one has to use both hands; then I always pinch the pen out of its holder, and ink my fingers putting it in again."

"Very well, my dear; only I wish you would not say 'bore,' it is so vulgar."

“It came first, aunt, like my sleeve.”

But he did not add anything more, for John knew from experience how an original sapling of impropriety soon grew under his awkward guidance into a regular banyan tree of small offences, which shed and rooted themselves with multiplied fruitfulness. So he said nothing, but went on with his work.

John's father sat by the fire, with a chocolate-coloured pocket-handkerchief on his left knee, reading the *Times*. Every now and then he doubled the paper afresh to get at the top of a column, at which intervals he glanced over his spectacles at things in general, and occasionally took a pinch of snuff. But that was only when he came upon something he liked, for snuff, like other pleasures, fails to gratify a discontented nose.

Meanwhile Miss Priscilla wrote on, and at last cleaned her pen on a small circular plantation of bristles, which spurtled some

ink over three beautifully-directed envelopes, with stamps attached.

John was on the point of saying, "Shall I lend you my sleeve?" but he let the opportunity slip.

His aunt, having dexterously covered her mishap, went out of the room to order dinner.

His father apparently struck a rich vein of news, for he took a double pinch of snuff, which he held in suspense for some moments, as if he were going to sneeze first, but he didn't. I cannot say the same of Prim, Miss Priscilla's cat, who happened to be yawning at that time immediately beneath his extended hand, and who, when she had recovered, walked off in a huff, waving her tail.

John's father, General Evans, was a retired officer who lived in tolerable but economical comfort on his pension and a small annuity. Having lost his wife, soon