

# IN POVERTY TO-DAY---PERHAPS WORTH MILLIONS TO-MORROW.

## Pretty Miss Craven, who Claims a Share of Senator Fair's Great Fortune, Tells How It Feels To Be Earning Her Living and Dreaming of a Dazzling Future.

San Francisco, July 7.—Like a flight of fancy on an idle summer day, a gold-dust powdered dream; like a fairy tale, like a page from the Arabian Nights, or, to be up to date, like a chapter from one of the Duchesse's novels, is life and its possibilities to Margaret Craven, the new step-sister of Mrs. Hermann Oelrichs and Virginia Fair, of New York's Four Hundred, and Charles L. Fair of well, not of New York's nor any other Four Hundred.

Extraordinary, romantic, startling; and only an ordinary California story after all—the customary aftermath of the life-story of the gold-seeker.

To-day Margaret Craven is the daughter of a schoolmistress dependent on her salary. Herself a struggling, just recognized actress; her feet on the lower, her young eyes on the top rungs of the ladder of fame, working, first of all, for the income work yields.

To-morrow—perhaps—sole heiress to a

million and a half of California's gold dollars.

There are women leaving home and peace and quiet for the stage.

"You would have your home where?"

"I've travelled all over this country, and I've never seen a place I'd rather live in than San Francisco. I want to make my home here."

"Then you'd go in for society?"

"That is what her step-sisters are doing in New York. They have won their way well socially."

If Virginia Fair, who is riding the very crest of the top-wave of popularity in the swiftest and most difficult society on this continent, were to extend a sisterly hand to Margaret Craven, and make a place by her side for her, she would find a companion every whit as well fitted to adorn the station, as carefully educated, as capable of skimming the cream of life. But of course she won't extend that sisterly hand; on the contrary, she'll treat her as the world treated Ishmael. Instead of making the

"I would have to describe every kind except one, and"—

"And?"

Why does woman stop with "and" and fall into a reverie? It leaves so much to conjecture.

Has that "and," and that pause, and that reverie anything to do with that womanly desire for a home? I'm sure I don't know, and I wouldn't venture to say.

But I do say a girl is unique and interesting and a refreshing novelty who, with a millio and a half, would want only

A home;

To marry for love;

myriad ways to wrest it from him. They pat his back vigorously the better to pick his pockets.

Fair could not be a cynic. Cynicism requires an intellect that he was incompetent; but he could gradually arrive at the conclusion that, for some reason, the world was not quite so good as it looked and sounded. Feeling this, in his obscure way, he would insensibly withdraw himself from it and try to find a life suited to his instincts—try to revive the miner in the millionaire. He would give up the task of trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, and content himself with enlarging the scope and substance of the latter to the utmost possible degree.



To have for friends persons of brain and achievement;

To wear pretty frocks;

To live in peace and tranquillity.

### The Millionaire's Will.

By Julian Hawthorne.

James G. Fair was the most romantic member of a most romantic quadrumvirate, who had their beginning in the era of the Argonauts of '49. An English aristocrat, or a representative of the French or Austrian nobility would have called him a man of obscure origin; he would have called himself a self-made man; we may let it go at that.

He was a picturesque and emphatic figure; in some respects a pathetic one; for he, like so many others before and since, was endowed with vast means, but not with the intelligence or training rightly and wisely to administer them.

From the red flannel shirt and cowhide boots of the miner, who, grimy with dirt and sweat, grubs hungrily in the earth for gold, he was suddenly uplifted from one height of affluence to another, until there were few wealthier men than he.

His mental and moral education, man-made, had by no means kept pace with his material progress; he was the same miner still, though now wearing broadcloth and diamonds. He did not know what to do with this boon of millions which he, in common with all men, had so ardently desired. He found to his surprise that a man has no more capacity for eating, drinking and assuaging his other appetites after becoming rich than before. He learned by experience that a Rothschild has no more physical capacity than a Hodge; not so much, in fact.

How was he to dispose of all his possessions?

He could make investments, like other capitalists; he could go into speculations; he could throw money away; but still that great, pile of the precious metal must go on mounting higher and higher, increasing while he slept, and even were he to be awake for a year at a stretch he could not devise expedients to keep it at any given level.

It was no wonder. How many even of the most educated among us would be able, were he suddenly endowed with the riches of Aladdin, to make a sensible use of them? What schemes could he put in execution grand enough to make a sensible hole in a thousand dollars a day? It requires the slow thought and meditation of a lifetime to learn how to accomplish such a feat, and a nature attuned to altruistic inspirations of the most lofty and sweeping character, to boot. No such genius could be predicted of poor James G. Fair, the stuff-bearded, stumpy-fingered, thick-shouldered, red-shirted gold digger. He could beget the Frankenstein, but could not control the monster afterward. It is enough to his credit, one would say, that he did not achieve enormous mischief.

But Fair was a most kindly, well-disposed person, who would not willingly do harm to any fellow-creature. He carried on his existence according to the best lights he had, and never really understood what he was about or what was his true relation to this strange world that he and we live in.

He was a man of powerful vitality and strong animal instincts; he could not sit still and keep silent. He rejoiced in what he fancied to be his good fortune, and thrust himself into the places where what he supposed to be life was most brilliant

and active. He came in contact with politics, inevitably, and was presently elected United States Senator. Because he could wallow in gold he was fitted to advise the nation! He found what is known here as society open to him, his arms stretched out, indeed, and he was attended by an ever-increasing army of friends of the kind that follow such men. In his naive way he watched the behavior of cultivated people, and did his best to imitate it. He had a few real friends, perhaps—men who had been poor with him, and had shared fortune like his, but they were not in a post-

he happened to put up for the night, say, he would find a family circle of which he was the chief awaiting him. The elements of his character were simple and on the surface. He wanted to make the objects of his affection comfortable and—so far as he could—respectable.

Had all America been Mormon, Fair would doubtless have surpassed Brigham Young himself in the multitude of his better halves. But bigamy stopped the way all he could do was to bestow deeds of gift and similar considerations. At all events, if he gave contracts of marriage also, it must have been conditionally, or with private understandings of some sort. He was too well known to be able to deceive his inamoratae, even had he been disposed to do so.

But the love of documents evidently grew upon him; it is a perilous passion. He loved to be forever filling out and signing legal blanks, and perhaps in the enthusiasm of the moment was not always careful to examine a particular blank before filling it out. We can imagine him impulsively pulling a document out of his pocket, scribbling away wherever he found an open place, and handing it over with a "There, take that, my dear!" The lady smiles; endearments follow; the document is salted down in a safe place, there to remain until certain contingencies make its production expedient. That is James G. Fair's signature, is it not? Well, then, least said soonest mended. Hand over!

The time came when Mrs. Fair's patience was at an end, and she retired from this partnership, with the respect and sympathy of her friends. Fair himself manfully refrained from complaints, but he was probably surprised at her action, and his feelings were hurt. He continued to move among men as before, and rather more so among women, but nothing of moment outwardly transpired until after his death, and then the interest of his career culminated rapidly, as well it might.

Among the many documentary forms which had enlisted his affection, that of the will was by no means least. He scattered wills broadcast, with no apparent system. It is fortunately true that he was almost as fond of destroying as of writing them. We are not informed how many wills he made, but he must have thought that year pleasant which did not see the signing of more than one. Had his days been prolonged he might have amassed a unique collection. Lawyers have reason to be grateful to him as it is, just as the writer of the coming Great American Novel has for the material for several absorbing chapters in that long promised romance of our Republic.

Upon his decease a will was produced. It makes little difference which of the lot it happened to be. It was promptly challenged. It is the fate of the wills of rich men to be challenged. Heirs at law are endowed with a sense of justice peculiarly sensitive. Though the heavens fall, let justice be done. The rights—their rights—must be vindicated at any cost. Probably the will in question was not one of his author's happier efforts. He could do much better when he was on his mettle. However, it did not meet the exigencies of the situation. Among other lapses there was a bequest to a certain young man bearing Fair's name. It was objected that this personage had no legal claim to that appellation. Fair's son he might be, but he was not a Fair. To the natural eye he might seem to exist, but in the sight of the law he was invisible. No millions for him! This was the first round, but the fight is yet on, and each succeeding round unveils the fascination of the foregoing ones.

Dark rumors began to become audible to the effect that there was a formidable plunger in the woodpile. But this phrase is vulgar and perhaps inadequate. Let us put it that there was a lady in the case. She was a school teacher, known as Mrs. Nettie L. Craven. She was no longer in her first youth; in fact, her acquaintance with the millionaire dated back at least twenty years. This lady was reported to hold certain deeds executed by the late Senator giving her valuable properties in

comparatively early in his career, and she stood by him longer than many women would have done.

I know not what particular thing it was that finally led her to demand a separation; probably it was an accumulation of particulars. Fair was not by nature more "immoral" than the average man, but think what opportunities he had to indulge his fancies! Let us not ourselves be cynical, but out of a hundred women-taking the world as we find it—how many can resist twenty million dollars? Of course Fair, no more than any man, wished to be loved only for his money, but how was Fair to tell that his money and not himself was the object of these women's adoration? Or suppose he might have told, would he not by every means strive to disguise the truth from himself? If not seldom comes to this with our rich man that he prizes above all others the parasite who can lie to him most ingeniously and plausibly. He realizes that he can live only in a fool's paradise, and obviously it is to his interest to make that paradise as secure as circumstances allow.

We may never know—Heaven knows such knowledge is not desirable—how many entanglements Fair had. It seems as if he might have owned an "establishment" in half the States of the Union. Wherever

be happened to put up for the night, say, he would find a family circle of which he was the chief awaiting him. The elements of his character were simple and on the surface. He wanted to make the objects of his affection comfortable and—so far as he could—respectable.

Had all America been Mormon, Fair would doubtless have surpassed Brigham Young himself in the multitude of his better halves. But bigamy stopped the way all he could do was to bestow deeds of gift and similar considerations. At all events, if he gave contracts of marriage also, it must have been conditionally, or with private understandings of some sort. He was too well known to be able to deceive his inamoratae, even had he been disposed to do so.

But the love of documents evidently grew upon him; it is a perilous passion. He loved to be forever filling out and signing legal blanks, and perhaps in the enthusiasm of the moment was not always careful to examine a particular blank before filling it out. We can imagine him impulsively pulling a document out of his pocket, scribbling away wherever he found an open place, and handing it over with a "There, take that, my dear!" The lady smiles; endearments follow; the document is salted down in a safe place, there to remain until certain contingencies make its production expedient. That is James G. Fair's signature, is it not? Well, then, least said soonest mended. Hand over!

The time came when Mrs. Fair's patience was at an end, and she retired from this partnership, with the respect and sympathy of her friends. Fair himself manfully refrained from complaints, but he was probably surprised at her action, and his feelings were hurt. He continued to move among men as before, and rather more so among women, but nothing of moment outwardly transpired until after his death, and then the interest of his career culminated rapidly, as well it might.

Among the many documentary forms which had enlisted his affection, that of the will was by no means least. He scattered wills broadcast, with no apparent system. It is fortunately true that he was almost as fond of destroying as of writing them. We are not informed how many wills he made, but he must have thought that year pleasant which did not see the signing of more than one. Had his days been prolonged he might have amassed a unique collection. Lawyers have reason to be grateful to him as it is, just as the writer of the coming Great American Novel has for the material for several absorbing chapters in that long promised romance of our Republic.

Upon his decease a will was produced. It makes little difference which of the lot it happened to be. It was promptly challenged. It is the fate of the wills of rich men to be challenged. Heirs at law are endowed with a sense of justice peculiarly sensitive. Though the heavens fall, let justice be done. The rights—their rights—must be vindicated at any cost. Probably the will in question was not one of his author's happier efforts. He could do much better when he was on his mettle. However, it did not meet the exigencies of the situation. Among other lapses there was a bequest to a certain young man bearing Fair's name. It was objected that this personage had no legal claim to that appellation. Fair's son he might be, but he was not a Fair. To the natural eye he might seem to exist, but in the sight of the law he was invisible. No millions for him! This was the first round, but the fight is yet on, and each succeeding round unveils the fascination of the foregoing ones.

Dark rumors began to become audible to the effect that there was a formidable plunger in the woodpile. But this phrase is vulgar and perhaps inadequate. Let us put it that there was a lady in the case. She was a school teacher, known as Mrs. Nettie L. Craven. She was no longer in her first youth; in fact, her acquaintance with the millionaire dated back at least twenty years. This lady was reported to hold certain deeds executed by the late Senator giving her valuable properties in

comparatively early in his career, and she stood by him longer than many women would have done.

I know not what particular thing it was that finally led her to demand a separation; probably it was an accumulation of particulars. Fair was not by nature more "immoral" than the average man, but think what opportunities he had to indulge his fancies! Let us not ourselves be cynical, but out of a hundred women-taking the world as we find it—how many can resist twenty million dollars? Of course Fair, no more than any man, wished to be loved only for his money, but how was Fair to tell that his money and not himself was the object of these women's adoration? Or suppose he might have told, would he not by every means strive to disguise the truth from himself? If not seldom comes to this with our rich man that he prizes above all others the parasite who can lie to him most ingeniously and plausibly. He realizes that he can live only in a fool's paradise, and obviously it is to his interest to make that paradise as secure as circumstances allow.

We may never know—Heaven knows such knowledge is not desirable—how many entanglements Fair had. It seems as if he might have owned an "establishment" in half the States of the Union. Wherever



the city of San Francisco and elsewhere. The value was estimated at about a million and a quarter of dollars, with interest thereon accruing, and with other deeds in the background yet to hear from. Mrs. Craven, it would appear, had held these deeds for some time past, but had hitherto refrained from making the fact known, out of motives of modesty and delicacy more flattering to her heart than to her head.

At the urgency of friends she was now induced to present them and to request the handing over of the properties in question; or, should that be inconvenient, she was content to compromise for a fair sum in cash—say three-quarters of a million. It was not the money so much as justice that she cared for. She was evidently a true heir.

The other heirs consulted together, and a compromise seemed at hand, when of a sudden negotiations were suspended. Mrs. Craven's advising friend was named as the cause of this suspense. He had to be "taken care of" to the tune of half a million. He did not even pretend to be an heir, and his claim was indignantly disallowed. Justice was outraged. Rather let the lawyers have the whole of it. And issue was joined once more.

But now a new element entered into the fray. Mrs. Craven had an ace up her sleeve. She was not Mrs. Craven at all, in reality, since they would have it, and rush upon their doom, let them hear the truth that she would fain have spared them; she was Mrs. Craven Fair. She had a marriage contract to prove it, written by herself, but signed and sealed by Fair. Incidentally, she was likewise furnished with a new will, written by Fair with a lead pencil, and superseding the one over which the original fight had taken place. What a delightful complication!

As to the new will, it does not seem to be of much importance, though there was omitted from it a certain trust clause which had caused heart-burnings in the alleged original one. At first this omission led the heirs to prefer it to the old, but when the courts decided that the trust clause was illegal any way, the old will was restored to favor, and the suggestion was advanced that both the pencil will and the deeds of gift were forgeries, and the marriage contract into the bargain. Or, if not actual forgeries, there was something very fishy about them, and the pretended Mrs. Craven Fair must either prove her claims up to the hilt or she should be treated in a way that was unpleasant even to think of.

Meanwhile, the case was put on trial, and all California, with the rest of the country in the rear seats, applied itself to listen and observe.

So now behold Mrs. Craven Fair in the witness chair, nervous but brave in the consciousness of right, swooped upon savagely by opposing counsel with peak and claw. Hear the frozen objections and counter-objections of her own lawyers. Remark those poisonous insinuations against the lady's fair fame and motives; note the barbed repartee with which the defendant's counsel stabs back again. Surely, one would think, all the parties to this suit are at once the most pure and noble, and the richest and most soundly of the human race. But let us not take the matter too much to heart. All this dialogue means nothing. Certainly it has very little to do with the case nominally on trial. It is the fashion of the day. We shall get down to business after a while. How is an up-to-date lawyer to establish his reputation except by annihilating those of the parties of the other part?

The fight is still on, and no doubt we shall follow it with avidity to the end, if and there is ever to be. But as to which side wins, I fancy none of us cares. It would need an athletic heart to feel sympathy for either. The most likely issue is that both will be the worse for the encounter, and I am not sure that this result would not be the most popular, also.

The shabby story has a moral, no doubt, and it seems to me that it should be sought in the direction of the bequests of millionaires, and indeed of the whole millionaire class. Human law is impotent to restrict money-getting, and it should be so, but anybody can see that the gathering of these unwieldy fortunes is detrimental to the commonweal. The only remedy is in the individual conscience—in honesty and faith. Few of us believe that any given man is competent to manage and administer millions of dollars, but fewer still do not secretly believe that they themselves are so competent. The fallacy is transparent, but at the best great concentrations of capital are injurious to the community.

But here let me pause, convinced that only Mr. Bellamy or Mr. Howells is capable of doing justice to the theme.



Miss Craven as Photographed During the Interview.

million and a half of California's gold dollars.

To-day practising the little trifling economies and resorting to the makeshifts that a limited income imposes on luxurious tastes, denying herself the indulgence of horse and refinement craves; flattening her nose against the show-window of wealth and choosing of the glittering ware within, like a small boy outside a bookshop.

And to-morrow the world may be hers—the purchasable world—and she can have anything and everything she wants in the whetshop.

What will she choose? What dearest wish will she realize?

That depends a good deal on what sort of a girl she is.

In the first place, she is not at all the sort of girl great wealth would be burdensome to. She is not the sort to sit amid unaccustomed splendor and sigh for the time.

When we were so happy and so poor, Back at Grigsby's Station.

She could endure, if not with elation, at least with becoming resignation, the burden of wealth. Her education and her experience have both tended to develop her faculty for enjoying a life of luxury.

She lives with her mother in a modest little flat in a remote and unfashionable part of town—a little flat that would be extremely commonplace but for the impress of cultivated femininity it bears.

"We are not counting our chickens before they're hatched," she laughingly and adroitly replied in the pleasant sitting room of the little flat when I asked her what she would do with a million and a half.

"But if you had a million and a half? You could gratify your dearest wish. What is the first thing you'd do with it?"

"If I had a million and a half," she mused, "the very first thing I'd have"—a theatre of her own, a company of her own, herself a star; be presented to the queen and start a wide swath in society, to round the world, but with a title with a husband attached? What is there a pretty American girl with a million and a half can't have or can't do, thought I—"would be," she continued, "a home where I could live in peace and quiet. That is my dearest wish."

"Dear me! Really? What an extraordinary wish! At least for a young girl with the world before her."

"But is it, after all?"

A most truly womanly wish—and, if you've lived for years in your trunk, a most natural wish. It's the dream of the wanderer, to have a home where you can live in peace and quiet, a cheerful fireside, and a hospitable board with an extra plate or two. And she has been a wanderer and lived in her trunk for the six years she has been on the stage. The wandering is pleasant enough, but it's given her a taste for settling down.

"And you'd leave the stage?"

"Yes, I'd leave the stage." For home and peace and quiet, and all the things