

STAR OF HOPE

By Selina Elizabeth Higgins.

It was a fortunate circumstance that John Bross wore a heavy hat and a wig when, turning into one of the worst streets of the big city, he was suddenly pounced upon by two footpads. They did not even sound the warning of 'hands up!' but while one of them threw his arms about his neck from behind, the other raised



"I'll Be Glad To Do It, Governor."

ed a heavy slungshot and aimed a terrific blow at him.

"Help!" naturally shouted Mr. Bross, and then felt a stunning contact and sank helpless to the ground.

He was not entirely divested of consciousness, for as said, his hat and wig protected him. The deadening blow he received did him no physical injury beyond raising a bad lump on his head. As he sank down a blurred picture greeted his vision. A roughly dressed but stalwart man shot around the corner. He sprang at the two footpads bending over

their victim and preparing to rob him.

Whack! bang! biff! One of the fellows went hurtling head over heels into the gutter. The other, holding his hand to a badly damaged optic, sneaked away with a bellow of pain and discomfiture.

"Hurt, boss?" solicitously inquired the rescuer, helping Mr. Bross to his feet.

"No—not seriously," answered Mr. Bross confusedly. "They were footpads?"

"Just that. Luckily you hollered; I was just in time."

"Who—who are you?" spoke Mr. Bross feebly.

"Don't remember me?" laughed the other. "You gave me half a dollar just before you turned the corner. It's a big stake for a fellow as near desperation as I was, and I was glad to put up a fight for you. Why, mister, you're wearing a false wig and beard! What's that for, now?"

"Get me somewhere to rest and steady my shaken nerves," said Mr. Bross. "You have saved my life, my friend. Surely my money," he added, as they sat down at a table in the nearest restaurant. "I see you are honest and trustworthy and I want you to do a little service for me at a good compensation.

"I'll be glad to do it, governor," said the tramp.

"The reason I am disguised," explained Mr. Bross, "is that I have a curiosity to see low life as it really is in the slums of a great city."

"Say, mister," observed the tramp, spurring up, "you couldn't have struck a br'fer guide!"

The speaker proved his boast. When Mr. Bross had recovered himself a little they started out. For two hours the tramp piloted his companion through the lodging house district, a hideous experience that at times made his companion quail.

They sat down finally to rest in a drinking resort infested by mere wrecks of humanity. All along Mr. Bross betrayed more of interest than