THE PENNYCOMEQUICKS (VOLUME 3 OF 3)

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THE PENNYCOMEQUICKS

A Novel

BY
S. BARING GOULD

AUTHOR OF
'MEHALAH,' 'COURT ROYAL,' 'JOHN HERRING,' 'THE GAVEROCKS,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES
VOL. III.

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THE PENNYCOMEQUICKS.

CHAPTER XXXIV.
A DESOLATE HOUSE.

Philip was restless all that day, after Salome had departed. He had remained at home in the morning to see her off, and he did not return to his work at the factory till after lunch.

At the office, he found it impossible to fix his thoughts on the books and letters before him. He was not an imaginative man, but day-dreams forced themselves before him now; between his eyes and his ledger he saw the pale, tearful face of Salome through her veil. He found his thoughts travelling along the line with her. He saw her in a corner of the railway carriage, with her hands on her lap, looking out of the window, not to see anything, but to hide her wet cheeks from her fellow-passengers. He caught himself wondering whether she

had taken sandwiches with her and a little bottle of sherry. When he travelled—and he was called from home occasionally——there was always a neat little package in white paper and a tiny flat flask, pressed on him. Had any of the servants thought of these things for Salome? That she had thought of them for herself was unlikely. When she reached town, what would she do? Would the porters be attentive? Would they take her wraps and little odds and ends and see her into a cab? And would the flyman be civil, or would he seek to take advantage of a lone lady, especially one who looked ill and unhappy? Would not such an one become a prey to his rapacity, and be subject to rudeness?

What sort of weather would Salome have for crossing the Channel? She was going by Dover and Ostend, Brussels and the Grand Luxembourg, to Strasburg; thence by Basle to Lucerne, and so on by boat and diligence to Andermatt.

How would she manage about change of money? Where effect an exchange? She had never travelled abroad before; how would she contrive about her luggage? What sort of French scholar was she? Who would be her companions on the long night journey from Brussels to Strasburg? What if she had to endure association with vulgar, insolent, objectionable travelling comrades?

Philip became hot, then cold.

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said the clerk, coming to his desk. 'Are you aware that you have subscribed that letter twice over, Yours truly, P. Pennycomequick?'

'So I have; I will write it again.'

'And, sir—I beg pardon—you have directed this letter to Messrs. Brook & Co., Cotton Spinners, Andermatt. Is that right?'

'I have made a mistake. I will write the address again.'

At dinner, that evening, Philip was alone. The parlour-maid waited. She stood a little way off, behind his chair, whilst he ate. He was conscious that she watched him at his soup, that she was counting how many spoonfuls went into his mouth, that he was not unobserved when he added salt and pepper. She was down on his plate like a vulture on a dead camel, the moment he had taken his last spoonful. Probably she was finding it as embarrassing standing watching him eat as he found it eating with her watching.

'Mary,' said Philip, 'did Mrs. Pennycomequick have any refreshments with her when she left—sandwiches and sherry?'

'I beg your pardon, sir; I don't know. I will go and ask cook.'

She did know. Philip was sure she did, but made this an excuse to get out of the dining-room and its oppressive restraint to the free air of the kitchen.

Presently she returned.

'Well?' asked Philip.

'Please, sir, no. Cook says she tried to press them on missis, but missis, sir, wouldn't have 'em. She said she'd have no appetite.'

'What is it?' asked Philip, as a dish was offered.

'Curried rabbit, sir.'

'Curried rabbit? No, thank you.'

Philip looked across the table, to the place hitherto occupied by his wife. He had not been gracious, only coldly civil to her of late, but then—now he would have been glad to have had someone opposite him to whom he could have been coldly civil; someone to whom he might have remarked that the weather had been bad, that the barometer was rising, that the political situation was so and so.

Bother that woman!—he meant the parlour-maid. Then aloud, 'What is it? Oh, veal.' He would have some veal. 'Stuffing?' Oh! the stuffing formed that brown wart at the side, did it?

He tried to eat his veal, but felt that the eye of Mary was on the back of his head, that she was looking at the nape of his neck, and the hair there, and the collar-button, and a little dust that lay on the collar of his coat. Philip had a mole on the nape of his neck, and he was convinced that this mole formed an object of the liveliest interest to Mary. She was watching the mole; when he opened his jaw, the mole took a header and went under his collar; when he shut his mouth it rose above the collar; whilst he was chewing, the mole danced on the horizon of his collar, to Mary's infinite amusement.

Philip turned round. His imagination made him fancy that Mary was tittering, overcome by the antics played by his mole.

Philip took wine, and as he felt the glow of the sherry pass down his throat, he wondered whether Mary felt a glow of sympathy down her throat, occasioned by seeing him drink the sherry.

Her presence was unbearable, and yet—if he dismissed her—how was he to be served?

'I'll ask someone to dine with me to-morrow night,' he said to himself. Then he turned to Mary as she removed his plate, and said, 'How is baby this afternoon? Does he fret much at his mother's being away?'

'I beg your pardon, sir; I don't know. I'll run and ask nurse.'

Of course she knew, but she made this an excuse for getting out of the dining-room into the freer air of the nursery.

Never, in all his life, had Philip found himself more impatient of the silence imposed on him, more desirous to hear his own voice. In his lodgings he had eaten his meals alone—a chop and some potatoes—and he had had a book or a paper at his side whilst eating; the landlady or the slavey had not stood in the room watching him, observing the parting in his hair behind his head, making fun of his mole, impatient to dust his collar. In his lodgings he had drunk beer or London cooper—now he drank claret, sherry, port; but he would have drunk

even water, if he might have been alone.

’No, thank you; no dessert!’ He jumped up—he was eager to leave the room.

’Please, sir, any cheese?’

’No, thank you, no cheese.’

He ran away from his half-finished dinner to his own study, where he could be alone, away from the insufferable Mary. Then he rang the bell.

’You may bring me up the claret and port here—and the preserved ginger,’ he ordered. Then thought he had acted absurdly, and would have countermanded the order had he not been ashamed to confess how unhinged he was.

He sat in his own room, with his claret glass in his hand, dreaming, looking into the fire.

’Where was Salome now? Was she thinking of home—of her baby—of—of—him?’

Then he wondered whether she were cold, and hungry, and tired. She had not slept the previous night. She had been busy packing, or going in and out of baby’s room, to kiss the little sleeping face, or to pray by the crib, or let the dew of her tears fall over it.

Philip stood up. He left his glass unfinished, and went upstairs to the nursery. He found the door ajar, and the room empty. The nurse had gone down for a talk in the kitchen—no doubt about Master, and Mary was telling her about his mole, and the spots of dust on his collar.

He entered the nursery and stood by the crib, and looked at the sleeping child.

Little Philip was now quite well again, and was very sound asleep. He was undoubtedly a Pennycomequick. He had dark hair, and long dark eyelashes. But surely—surely there was some trace of his mother in the tiny face. It could not be that he did not bear in him something of her. Philip looked intently at the child, and tried to find out in him some feature of his wife.

There, on this side of the crib, had Salome’s hands rested that night when little Philip was ill. Philip, the father, knew the exact spot where her hands had rested, and where her forehead had leaned, with the red-gold hair falling down over the side upon the bedding. Where the white left hand had clutched, with the gold ring sparkling on it, there now Philip placed his hand, and there streamed up to him from the crib of his child a magnetic influence that put him *en rapport* with his absent wife, brought to him a soothing sense of oneness with her who was far away, and filled his heart with regret and yearning.

The child began to cry.

Then Philip rang the bell, and when the nurse arrived, red and blowing——

’How is it that you are not at your post?’ he asked.

’Please, sir, I only just ran down to warm up Dr. Ridge’s Food for the baby,’

was the answer.

Philip descended to the study, and resumed his claret glass. At the same time he began to consider his own conduct towards Salome, and, now only, saw that it did not bear the same complexion as he had hitherto attributed to it. In vain did he call up before his mind the dishonour of relationship with such a man as Beaple Yeo, a rogue after whom the police had been in quest more than once. In vain did he poke the fires of his wrath at the trickery of his marriage, he could not convince himself that Salome had been privy to it; and if not privy to it, what right had he to treat her with the severity he had exercised? But not even then did it occur to him that the main element of his wrath was supplied by his own wounded pride.

The discovery of her parentage must have been to Salome a crushing humiliation. What justification was there for his adding to her burden by his reproaches and coldness? She could not undo the past, unmake her relationship. His anger, his resentment, could not improve the situation, could not shake the truth of the hateful fact that he was allied to so great a scoundrel. Though she had been married under a wrong name, that would not invalidate the marriage even if he wished it—even if he wished it! Did he wish it?

He thought about Uncle Jeremiah's will, and how that by it Salome had been left almost sole legatee; how that the mill and everything had been given to her, and how that in a mysterious manner that will had been cancelled. The old haunting suspicion that his aunt had meddled with and defaced the will returned. He thought of her behaviour when he allowed her to see that he entertained a suspicion; of her evasion of her promise; of her laxity of principle; and he could not shake off the thought that it was quite possible that through her Salome had been defrauded of her rights.

If so, had he any right to complain if he had been deceived? How did Mrs. Sidebottom show beside Salome? And he—he, Philip—had he shown in generous colours either?

It was said of that distinguished epicure the Marquis de Cussy, 'L'estomac de M. n'a jamais bronché,' and the same may be said of most consciences—but not of all. As we have seen even Mrs. Sidebottom's conscience once felt a twinge at the time when consciences generally do feel twinges, when too late to redress wrong actions. So now did Philip, as he sat over the fire with his claret glass in his hand, become aware that he had acted with undue severity, and he spilt the claret on the floor.

Next day, Philip went to the old bedroom which he and his wife had occupied till he changed his quarters. He found the housemaid there, who seemed startled at seeing him enter.

'Please, sir, I'm drawing down the blinds, because of the sun.'

'I will trouble you to leave the blinds up,' said Philip. 'I do not choose to have the house—the room—look as though someone in it were dead. Here—by the way, my room downstairs will need a thorough turn out. I will return to this room; at all events for a time.'

'Very well, sir.'

She left the chamber. He stood in it and looked about him. Salome had left everything tidy. Some of her drawers were open, not many were locked. Most of her little private treasures had been removed.

Where was the photograph on a stand of Uncle Jeremiah? It had no doubt been taken away by her. Where the three little owls sitting on a pen-wiper? It was gone—and the Christmas cards that had stood on the chimney-piece, and the ugly glazed yellow flower vase, given her, on her birthday, by the cook.

The clock on the chimney-piece was stopped. Salome had wound that up regularly; her hand was no longer there, and it had been allowed to run down. The room was dead without the tick of the clock. Philip wound it up and set the pendulum swinging. It ticked again, but in a formal, weary manner, unlike the brisk and cheerful tick of old.

The room had a cold unfurnished look without Salome's knickknacks—trifles in themselves, but giving an air of refinement and cheeriness to the apartment. He went over to the dressing-table. No combs and brushes, no hairpins, bottles of hair oil and wash there—simply a table with a looking-glass on it. One little glass was there, but no flowers in it; and hitherto it had never failed to contain some—even in winter. With what ingenuity had Salome kept that little glass on the dressing-table bright—in winter at times with holly only, or ivy leaves—or moss and a scarlet Jew's ear!

It was the same downstairs. There the flowers were ragged and faded in the vases. Salome was away, who had rearranged them every second day.

The room smelt musty, and Philip threw up the window. He stood at it, and looked out dreamily. Where was Salome now? Was she in Switzerland? Had she any heart to look at the mountains? Would the wonderful scenery be any joy to her—alone?

'I can never dine as I did yesterday,' said Philip. 'I will ask Tomkins in.'

That day he did invite Tomkins, his head traveller. But he was irritated with Tomkins and angry with the maid, because Tomkins' seat had been put at the end of the table, in Salome's place; and Tomkins was a different object for his eyes to rest on from Salome. The dinner passed wearily. Philip was not, indeed, concerned about the parlour-maid examining the mole on his neck, but he had to make conversation for Tomkins, and to listen to Tomkins' commercial room tales, and to be civil to Tomkins.

After dinner Tomkins was in no hurry to go—he enjoyed the Pennycome-

quick port, and on the port grew confidential, and Philip became tired, every minute more tired, of Tomkins, and was vexed with himself for having asked Tomkins in, and vowed he would dine by himself next evening. Then Tomkins, finding it difficult to rouse Philip's interest and excite a laugh, began to tell rather broad stories, and was undeterred by Philip's stony stare, till Philip suddenly stood up, rang for coffee, and said it was time to adjourn to another room, and so cut Tomkins short.

But even after Tomkins had been got into the drawing-room, and had been chilled there by its size and coldness, and the inattention of his host, he showed little inclination to depart, and threw out hints that he could strum an accompaniment to himself on the 'pi-anny,' and sing a song, sentimental or humorous, if Mr. Pennycomequick would like to hear him. But Philip pleaded headache, and became at length so freezing as to force Tomkins to take his leave.

Philip did not feel it necessary to accompany his head commercial into the hall; but Mary was there to assist him into his great-coat, and find him his hat, and give him a light for his cigar.

'Well, Mary,' said Tomkins pleasantly. 'Thank you, Mary; to take a light from you warms the heart, Mary. I'm as blind as a beetle in the dark, and 'pon my word, dear, I don't know my right hand from my left in the dark. You wouldn't object, would you—there's a dear—just to set me on my way home, with my nose in the right direction, and then my cigar-light will carry me on? Can't go wrong if I follow that. But it is the first step, Mary—the first step is the thing. *Le premier paw*, say the French.'

Then he hooked his arm into hers, and the demure Mary had no objection to take just half a dozen steps along the road with the affable Mr. Tomkins—who was a widower—and to leave the hall door ajar as she escorted him part of his way home.

Philip sat in the drawing-room in bad humour. It was dull dining by himself: it was insufferable dining with Tomkins. He could not invite brother manufacturers to dine with him every evening. What must he do? He would return to plain food and a book at his solitary meal, and dismiss the critical parlour-maid till he required his plate to be changed.

Philip rang the bell. The teacups were left on the table. His bell remained unanswered. He rang again. It was still unnoticed. Then he angrily went down into the hall, and found the door ajar. He called to the servants in the kitchen for Mary. The housemaid appeared. 'Please, sir, she's gone out a moment to post a letter.'

'What! at this time of night?'

'It was most particular; her mother be dreadful porely, sir, and Mary do take on about her orful!'

’Go to bed—lock up,’ ordered Philip; and he stood in the hall whilst the frightened domestics filed past.

Then he turned down the gas and returned to the drawing-room. He would hear Mary when she came in by the hall door, and would at once give her her dismissal.

He sat waiting. Here was fresh trouble come on him through his wife’s absence. He would have to see that his servants were kept in proper order; that they kept proper hours.

He had hardly resumed his seat before he heard steps in the hall, and then on the stairs. Certainly not the tread of Mary; not light, and not stealthy, but firm and ponderous.

What step could it be? Tomkins returning to tell one of his good stories, or to ask for soda-water? He listened, and hesitated whether to rise or not. It must be the step of Tomkins; no one else would venture to come in at this time. The step was arrested at the drawing-room door; then Philip stood up, and as he did so the door was thrown open, and Uncle Jeremiah stood on the threshold, looking at him. He knew the old man at once, though he was changed, and his hair white.

’Philip,’ said Jeremiah, ’where is your wife? Where is Salome?’

Philip was too much astonished to answer.

Then said Jeremiah sternly: ’Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.’

CHAPTER XXXV.

OFF.

When I was a boy I possessed a pet owl. It was a source of amusement to me to feed that owl with mice. When the trap had caught one of these night disturbers, I took it to the solemn owl, who sat blinking in the daylight, half awake and half asleep. The owl at once gulped down the mouse, and then went fast asleep with the mouse in her inside, but with the end of the tail protruding from her beak. About an hour later I went to the owl, took hold of the end of the mouse’s tail and pulled it, whereupon up the throat of the owl came the mouse, backwards, and the bird of wisdom was roused to wild wonder and profound puzzlement to account for the sudden disgorging of her meal. Mrs. Sidebottom had bolted

Uncle Jeremiah, and was doing her best to digest him and his fortune, when, unexpectedly, her meal came to life again, and she sat gulping, blinking, bemused in her sitting-room, waiting for the return of Lambert from the billiard-table, to communicate to him the news that had reached her. Anyone who had seen my owl would perceive at once that the case of Mrs. Sidebottom was analogous.

The consternation could hardly have been greater on Quilp reappearing when a posse of wives was sitting discussing him, esteemed dead; and yet Jeremiah was no Quilp. But it is not Quilps alone who would produce dismay were they to return to life. Imagine the emotions produced in a hospital which has received a bequest of ten thousand pounds, and has spent fifteen guineas on the portrait of the benefactor, should the benefactor descend from the frame, declare himself alive, and require the return of his thousands. Think of the junior partner, who has been waiting till a senior shuffled off his mortal coil to make room for him; how would he feel were the dead to return to life? Think of the curate waiting for the living, the next presentation to which is for him, should the old rector, after having laid himself down in his grave, change his mind and get out and resume his benefice for another fifteen years!

Mrs. Sidebottom had but just received news of the reappearance of Uncle Jeremiah, and, like an energetic woman, she wasted as little time as might be in exclamations of dismay. She was not the woman to hover in uncertainty, and ask advice how to get out of a difficulty. Like one who has trodden in mire, she pulled her foot out instantaneously to set it on dry and firm ground.

'I don't know how the law stands, and whether the sentence of the Court of Probate can be reversed,' she said; 'but of one thing I am very sure—that he who has can hold, and tire out those who try to open his hands, if he has any wit.'

Then in came Lambert.

'Oh, Lamb!' exclaimed his mother, 'here is a pretty predicament we are in! My brother Jeremiah has come to life again!'

The captain burst out laughing.

'This is no laughing matter,' said his mother testily. 'How can you be such a hyæna? Jeremiah has reappeared at Mergatroyd, and there is—well, I can't mince matters—the devil to pay. I presume he will want to reclaim what we have distributed between us. The mill, of course, with the business, he will take back under his control, and cut off the supply thence. That is a serious matter—and then there is the money he left——'

'Which I suppose he will require you to return?'

'Which I can't and won't return. Bless me, Lamb, what a state of things! Our income reduced from half the profits of the business to one-sixth, which he cannot touch, as that comes to me under my marriage settlement. We must leave

England—we must leave at once. I shall know nothing about Jeremiah's return. I shall keep away till I see in what humour he is, what he intends to do, and in what light he regards me. There are trifles connected with the administration I don't care to meet him about. As for his savings, his securities, and so on, I will return nothing'—she stamped her foot—'no, Lamb; for, in fact, I can't!'

'How do you know that he is back, and that this is not a false alarm?'

'Look here——' She tossed a letter to him. 'It is laconic. He wrote it with a sneer—I know he did. Jeremiah never liked me. He has disappeared, and has come to life again, out of spite.'

Captain Pennycomequick—to be correct, Penycombe-Quick—took the letter and read it with a smile.

It was short.

'DEAR LOUISA,

'I am back, hearty again. I have been to Algiers for my health. I had rheumatic fever, and when I came round I found you had already pronounced me dead, and had divided the spoils—concerning which, a word later.

'Your affectionate brother, 'JEREMIAH P.'

'Is it his handwriting?' asked Lambert.

'Of course it is. Here is a pretty mess for me to be in. I shall have everyone laughing at me, because I swore that the man in the shirt and great-coat was Jeremiah. "Concerning which—the spoils—a word later." What does he mean by that, but that he proposes calling me to account for every penny? I will not remain in England. I cannot. I will not receive this letter.'

'But you have received it.'

'I shall make my landlady return it, with a note to say that she took the liberty to open it, so as to be able to write to the sender, and say that I have gone abroad for my health. Where shall I say I have gone to?—To Algiers, whence Jeremiah has just returned.'

'You cannot do that.'

'But I will. Self-preservation is the first law. As for the money—I lost some by that Beaple Yeo; not much, but some. I was so prompt, and had such presence of mind, that I caught the man and made him refund before he had got rid of most of it. I have money in securities—railway debentures and foreign loans. I have all the papers by me—I trust no one but myself, since my faith has been shaken

by Smithies. Lamb, we must be off directly. It would be too much a shock to my nerves to see my brother that was dead and is alive again. What are you laughing at, Lamb? You really are silly.'

'There is some prospect now of my coming to that hundred and fifty, I hope,' said the captain. 'Uncle Jeremiah may now write another will.'

'How selfish you are! You think only of yourself, not how I am afflicted. But, Lamb, I have had you sponging on me all these years, and keeping me in an exhausted financial condition that is intolerable.'

'We shall revert to our former condition, I suppose, now,' said Lambert unconcernedly.

'That is precisely what I cannot do. Return to poverty and middle-class society, the very crown and climax of which is a Lord and Lady Mayoress—when we are on the eve of making the acquaintance of county people! What have you done for yourself? You have been too inert to seize the chances I have put in your way. You must marry money. Jane Mulberry was worth five hundred per annum, and you let her slip through your fingers.'

'She had a moustache.'

'She had money. Five hundred pounds would gild it. Then there was Miss Smithson.'

'She was insipid.'

'What of that? The insipid women make the best wives, they are so non-resistant. In marriage, men should be teetotalers and take weak and washy women. They are far the best to get on with.'

'Don't think I've much fancy for such,' said the captain languidly.

'I tremble to think,' said his mother angrily, 'what the offspring of a weak woman and such an unenergetic man would be!'

'Then why recommend such a marriage?'

'Because we must consider ourselves, not the unborn possibilities. However, to return to the subject that now most occupies me. My condition is desperate. You must marry. I can support you no longer.'

'And so you deport me to Algiers?'

'My dear boy, we are not going to Algiers.'

'Then where to?'

'To Andermatt.'

'Andermatt!—Where is that?'

'On the St. Gothard.'

'And pray why to Andermatt on the St. Gothard?'

'Because Mrs. Baynes is there.'

'Oh, by all means.'

'What makes you say "by all means"?' asked his mother sharply.

'She's a jolly girl, good-looking, and no nonsense about her.'

'Do you think that I would take you to her if that were all? You know she is a widow. She has her hundred and fifty from what was sunk by Jeremiah when she married, but that is not all: she has been left well provided for by her husband, Mr. Albert Baynes. I know all about it. I got everything out of Salome. I told her how anxious I was about her sister, how pained I was concerning her bereavement, and how I hoped that she was not left in bad circumstances. Salome very openly told me that she was very comfortably provided for, and no stipulation made about marrying again. I know what Salome meant when she let me draw that out of her—she meant that you should know; but I then had my eye on Miss Smithson. However, now that we must go abroad we may as well kill two birds with one stone. Besides, as Jeremiah took such a lively interest in Janet, he may be gratified at your marrying her, and not press me with demands which I could not comply with—which I will not, no, I will not comply with.'

'But she is in bad health.'

'Oh, nothing but sentiment at her husband's death; besides, if she is delicate, all the better.'

'I don't see that,' said the captain, feebly disgusted at his mother's heartlessness.

'Fiddle-faddle,' said Mrs. Sidebottom; 'it is all part of the business—it goes with widows' caps. When I lost Sidebottom I was worn to a shadow and got a cough; but I began to recover flesh when I went into half mourning, and lost my cough with my weeds. When you appear on the scene it will be codliver oil to her.'

'It will be very dull at this place you speak of.'

'Of course it will be dull and hateful, but what will you have? I sacrifice myself for you. You must get off my hands and shift for yourself; I have had you as a charge too long. I want to see you well provided for, and as the Smithson and Jane Mulberry failed, you must take the Baynes. I can't tell you exactly what she is worth, but I will ascertain from Salome, who is there, before you commit yourself. Remember, Lamb, we must go. I cannot stay here and face Jeremiah.'

'Why not? It would be the most honourable thing to do, and might answer the best in the end.'

'I cannot do it. Why—how would you feel—how could you feel towards a person who had pronounced you dead, and proceeded to administer? Much as a man might towards the surgeon who proceeded to dissect him before he was dead. No, Lamb, I will not remain. I can always write to Jeremiah, and express my profound astonishment to hear of his return, and assume an air of injury that I should have been left in the dark so long. Indeed, I think that will be the card to play—throw the blame on him, and if the case comes into court, I can lay stress on

this. Wilfully he allowed me to remain in ignorance of his existence. Something had to be done. The factory would not go on of itself. The factory could not be carried on without money. The business would go to pieces unless energetically prosecuted. Jeremiah may feel grateful, and ought to feel grateful to me, that I acted with such readiness in the matter and saved the firm of Pennycomequick from ruin. I can bring in a heavy bill against him for my services. However, I had rather do this from a distance, and by letter. I will take the injured tone, and make him dance to that tune.'

Mrs. Sidebottom was a woman of resource. She never suffered herself to be discouraged by adversity; and adversity now faced her wearing the mask of her brother returned to life. She had much energy of character and fertility of invention, which, if she had been a woman of principle, instead of unscrupulous self-seeking, might have made her a valuable person in society. She was at present frightened—she had invested some of the money she had drawn to herself from Jeremiah's savings in a manner that promised well; some she had lost. She neither desired to be called to account for what she had squandered, nor to be forced to reimburse those happy speculations which were likely to place her in easy circumstances. Until she had had good professional advice, and until she knew what her brother intended, she considered that safety lay in absence.

She went about in York, leaving her card; and when she saw a friend, she told her that she was off to the Continent for a bit of a change. She had not been very well, and the doctors had insisted on variation of scene and air, and she felt herself that life was too short to spend it in one place. The world was large and must be seen, and those dear snowy mountains—they possessed for her a fascination she had struggled against, but had been unable further to resist.

'My dear Mrs. Jacques, you know what anxiety and care I had last year about my poor brother's affairs—winding up, you know. I held up through it all, animated by a sense of duty, but it told on me in the end, and now I am going to relax. I shall spend the summer in the Alps, and unless I am much better I shall go to Algiers for the winter. Have you any friends who will be there next Christmas? Oh, my dear! to think of Christmas in Algiers; a hot sun and no plum-pudding!'

Mrs. Sidebottom had not the faintest desire to spend a winter in Algiers; she thought Mentone, or Florence, or Pau would suit her better, according to where she could get into the best society, and she resolved to leave the determination to the future; if she found during the summer people whom it was worth her while hanging on to, and who were wintering anywhere abroad, she would attach herself to them. But with that curious crookedness which prevails in some natures, she went about asking questions about hotels and *pensions* at Algiers, keeping her ears open at the same time to hear of persons of position who were

likely to winter elsewhere. It was possible that, if she made it well known that she would winter in Algiers, acquaintances would tell her of friends of theirs who were wintering elsewhere. Nor was she wrong.

'Oh, I am so sorry you are not going to Mentone; Sir William Pickering is going there because of the health of dear Lady Pickering. Such charming people—you would have liked to know them—but as you are going to Algiers, of course I cannot get you acquainted with each other.' Mrs. Sidebottom knew well enough that if she had said she was going to Mentone this piece of information would not have been vouchsafed her. 'Oh! Mrs. Sidebottom—you are visiting Algiers. There is a nice young lady, a niece, going there. She is in a decline. I shall be eternally obliged to you if you would show her kindness; she is badly off, and it would be goodness itself if you would just look in now and then and ascertain that she is comfortable and not imposed on.'

'My dear Mrs. Tomson, you could not have asked me to do anything that would have pleased me more—but unfortunately it is not certain I am going to Algiers. If I make up my mind to go I will write to you for the address of your niece, and you may rely on me, I will do my utmost for her.' This was accompanied by an internal mem.: Have nothing further to do with Mrs. Tomson. I'm not going abroad to be anybody's nurse. Heaven forbid!

'Oh, Mrs. Sidebottom! So you are off to Switzerland and Algiers. Now there could be nothing more opportune. We are going to have a bazaar to raise money for the relief of the peasants in France, who have suffered from the war. Would you mind sending as your contribution a box of charming Swiss carvings and delightful Algerian and Moorish pottery—the latter will sell rapidly and at high prices—you are so good and charitable, I know you will.'

'I will certainly do so. Rely on me. I intended to have had a stall; I will send two cases instead'—with a mental mem.: Forget all about the bazaar till it is over, and then write a proper apology.

'Oh, Mrs. Sidebottom! I've lost my maid again. As you are going to Switzerland, will you do me the favour of looking out for a really serviceable girl—you know my requirements—and arrange all about trains and so on, so that she may reach me safely? Perhaps you would not mind advancing her journey-money, and I will repay it—if she suits, of which I have no doubt. I am determined to have no more English servants.'

Mrs. Sidebottom found that her acquaintances were eager to make use of her, but then she had sufficient knowledge of the world to expect that.

'Have you secured through tickets, Lamb?'

'Yes, mother.'

'Then we are off to-morrow.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.
DEPOSED.

Gone as a dream!—that brief period of hope and happiness and comfort. Philip had a disquieting prospect opening before him, as disquieting as that which drove Mrs. Sidebottom from England, but different in kind. Philip was ready enough to account for every penny, and return all the money undiminished which had come to his share. What troubled him was the fearful look-out of a return to furnished lodgings. He saw himself about to be cast forth from the elegancies, the conveniences of life, and cast down to its vulgarities and discomforts. He saw himself about to be transferred from the cushioned carriage on the smooth road, to a buggy on a corderoy way, all jolts and kicks and plunges and break-downs. He was about to descend from succulent joints and savoury *entremets* to mutton-chops alternating into beef-steaks, from claret to bitter beer, from a place of authority to one of submission, from progress to stagnation, from a house of his own over which to range at pleasure to confinement within two rooms, one opening out of the other. He must go back to streaky forks, and spoons that at dinner recall the egg of breakfast, to knives with adhesive handles and tumblers frosted with finger-marks, to mirror frames encased in fly-proof snipped green paper and beaded flower-mats, a horsehair sofa, a cruet-stand with old crusted mustard and venerable Worcester sauce in it, to wax fruit under a glass shade, as covered with dust as a Peruvian island with guano, to folding-doors into the adjacent bedroom, and to curtains tied back with discarded bonnet-ribbons. But it would have been bad enough for Philip, now accustomed to better things, to have had the prospect before him of descending alone; but he was no longer alone, he had a wife, who, however, was absent, and about whose return he was uncertain. And he had with him the encumbrance of a baby; and the encumbrance of a baby drew with it a train of dissatisfied and departing nurses, one after another, like the procession of kings revealed to Macbeth in Hecate's cave.

A babe in a lodging-house is as out of place as was the ancestral Stanley found in an eagle's nest on the top of a pine, of which the family crest preserves a reminiscence.

Uncle Jeremiah was restored to strength, moral as well as physical. He no

longer thought of his heart, he allowed it to manage its pulsations unconsidered. He was heartily glad that he had been saved committing an act of egregious folly, and he was prepared now to meet Salome without a twinge. Common-sense had resumed the place of upper hand; and the temporary disturbance was over for ever. To every man comes at some period after he has begun to decline a great horror of old age, an agonizing clutch at the pleasures and follies of youth, a time of intoxication when he is not responsible for his acts, an intoxication produced by fear lest life with its roses should have passed and left only thorns behind and decay. Men whose lives have been spent in business, subjected to routine, who have not thought of love and amusement, of laughter and idleness, are suddenly roused to find themselves old and standing out of the rush of merriment and the sunshine of happiness. Then they make a frantic effort to seize what hitherto they have despised, to hug to their hearts what they have formerly cast away. It is the St. Luke's summer, a faint reflex of the departed glory and warmth, a last smile before the arrival of the winter gales. No moment in life is so fraught with danger as this—at none is there more risk of shipwreck to reputation.

Now that Jeremiah had passed through this period, he could survey its risks with a smile and a sense of self-pity and a little self-contempt. He who had always esteemed himself strong had discovered that he could be weak, and, perhaps, this lesson had made him more lenient with the infirmities of others.

He returned to his friend John Dale, looking older by some years, but also more hale. He had touched the earth but had risen from it stronger than when he fell.

On reaching Bridlington, he learned from Dale the state of matters at Mergatroyd. Whilst there, a hasty note arrived for Mr. Dale from Salome to say that she was leaving, with her husband's consent, to be with her sister in Switzerland, and both thought they could read between the lines that there had been a fresh difference with Philip.

Thereupon Jeremiah went to Mergatroyd, and came in unexpectedly and unannounced on Philip.

Jeremiah Pennycomequick had not decided what course to pursue with regard to his sister and nephew. He was conscious that he had played them a trick, that he had put them to a test which he was not justified in applying to them.

He was angry with both—with his half-sister for the precipitation with which she had accepted and certified his death, and with Philip for his treatment of Salome. He did not disguise from himself that his interference in such a delicate matter as a quarrel, or an estrangement, between husband and wife, might make the breach worse.

When he arrived at Mergatroyd, he had not resolved what course to take.

He sat up half the night with Philip.

’You will find,’ said the latter with some pride, ’that I have maintained the business in a healthy condition; it is not in the condition it was during the Continental war which affected linen as well as other things, but that was of its nature ephemeral. It rests on a sound basis. Go through the books and satisfy yourself. My aunt,’ there was a tone of bitterness when he added this—’my aunt watched the conduct of the factory with a jealous eye, and did not trust my accounts without a scrutiny. As for what was in the bank, I can give an account of every penny, and the securities, such as came to me, are untouched.’

’I will look into these matters at my leisure,’ said Jeremiah, ’and if I find that matters are as you say, I will let you down lightly; only, I forewarn you, let down you will be. And now a word about Salome.’

’My wife,’ said Philip shortly.

’Your wife—exactly—but——’

’With regard to my wife, I brook no interference,’ said Philip haughtily. ’The mill is your affair, my domestic relations are my own.’

’You cry out before you are hurt,’ retorted Jeremiah; ’I am not about to interfere. I know that you are greatly disconcerted at the discovery as to the parentage of your wife.’

Philip held up his head stiffly and closed his lips tightly. He said nothing.

’I am not intermeddling,’ continued Jeremiah, ’but I wish you to understand this: that I have some claim to speak a word for Salome, whom I have always—that is to say—whom I have looked upon with fatherly regard. The two little girls grew up in my house, not a day passed but I saw them; I rode them as infants at my knee, I bought them toys. They ran to meet me—cupboard love, of course—when I came from the mill, because I had oranges or sweet things in my pocket. I took pride in them as they became blooming girls, I saw that they were well taught. After dinner they soothed me with their music, and when I was dull enlivened me with their prattle. Have I, then, no right to speak a word for one or the other? I have been to them more than a father. Their father deserted them as soon as they were born, but I have nurtured and clothed them, and seen to the development of their minds and the disciplining of their characters. It is absurd of you to deny me the right to speak. To interfere is not my purpose.’

’Very well, I will listen.’

’Then let me tell you this—I know who their father was. When Mrs. Cusworth came into this house she very honestly told me the truth about them, and by my advice she kept her counsel. It could do them only harm—cloud their joys—to know that they had a disreputable father. We knew nothing of the man’s subsequent history. He had disappeared, and might be—as we hoped—dead. But, even if alive, we did not suppose he would care to come in quest of his twin

daughters, and we trusted, should he do this, that he would not find them. We hoped that he might not conjecture that the children had been adopted by their aunt, and that she had moved into Yorkshire to Mergatroyd. Neither Salome nor Janet knew who their father was, or rather both supposed him to be that worthy man who perished so lamentably in my service. By what means he made the discovery and got on their track I do not know, and I hardly care to know. If I could take into my house the children of such a man, it hardly becomes you——'

Philip interrupted his uncle.

'That fellow Schofield never injured you as he did my father. He not only ruined him, but he also was the cause of his estrangement from you, or rather, yours from him.'

'Bear the man what grudge you will,' said Jeremiah hastily, 'but do not visit his offences on the head of his unoffending child.'

Philip stood up. He was angry, but not to be moved from his stiffness of manner.

'I think,' said he, 'you will be tired. I am, and probably bed is the best place for both. As this is now your house, and I am an intruder in it, I must ask permission to occupy my room for to-night.'

Jeremiah laughed. 'And you—a lawyer! Why, you are in legal possession, and till there is a reversal of the sentence of the Probate Court, I have no more rights than a ghost. No—I am your guest.'

Philip retired to his room. The words of Jeremiah, charging him with visiting the offences of the father on the unoffending child, were but the repetition of his own self-reproach, but for that very reason less endurable. It is the truth of a charge which gives it its sting. A man will endure to say to himself what he will not tolerate to be said to him by another.

He went to his room, but not to bed. He sat at the window, where Salome had sat, in the same chair, thinking with dark brow and set lips. In one thing, his self-esteem was encouraged. His uncle would see and be forced to acknowledge how thoroughly he had mastered the technicalities of the business, and with what order and prudence he had carried it on. He need not shrink from the closest examination into his conduct of the factory. Everything was in order, the books well kept, several contracts in hand. His uncle might dismiss him, but he could not say a word against his integrity and business habits. He had taken to himself nothing but what Mrs. Sidebottom, as administratrix, had passed over to him. And as to his uncle's disappearance, he had done nothing as to the identification of the wrong body; he had held himself neutral, as incapable of forming an opinion from inadequate acquaintance with his uncle. If blame was to be cast, it must fall heavily on Mrs. Sidebottom, but none would rest on him.

But—how about the future? Philip now recalled the discomfiture, the

monotonies, the irritations of lodging-house life. Could he go back to that? If his uncle offered to retain him in his house, could he consent? His pride counselled him to go, his love of comfort to remain.

Uncle Jeremiah had not invited him to remain, but Philip thought it likely that he might. His pride was galled in many ways. It would be most painful to him to continue at the factory, in which he had been a master, henceforth in a subordinate position. Should he return to the solicitor's firm at Nottingham, in which he had been before? That his services there were valued he was well aware, that his resignation of a clerkship therein had caused annoyance he was well aware; he knew, however, that his place was filled, and that if he returned to the office, he would be obliged to take a lower desk. He might, and probably would be, advanced, but that would require patience, and he must wait till a vacancy occurred. Besides, it would be a humiliation to have to solicit readmission, after he had left the office on stilts, as one who had come into a fortune.

Then—what was to be done about his wife? He could not maintain her and her child on a junior clerk's wage. Moreover, he had sent her away when he occupied a lofty moral platform, because connection with her sullied the fair name of Pennycomequick, and might injure the firm; and now that he no longer belonged to the firm, but was a poor clerk of no consequence in the world, was he to write to her a letter of humble apology, and ask her to return and share the beggary of a clerk's life in furnished lodgings with him, to unite with him in the long doleful battle against landladies? He had little doubt that Uncle Jeremiah would propose to make Salome an allowance, and that on this allowance together with his salary they might be able to rub along. But to accept such relief from Uncle Jeremiah, granted through his wife—his wife whom he had snubbed and thrust away—was not pleasant to contemplate.

Whatever way Philip considered the meal set before him, he saw only humble-pie, and humble-pie is the least appetizing of dishes. Philip approached it as a sulky child does a morsel which his nurse requires him to eat, without consuming which he must expect no pudding. He walked round it; he looked at it from near, then he drew back and considered it at long range, then he touched it, then smelt it, then turned his back on it, then—with a grumble—began to pick a few crumbs off it and put them between his lips.

He went to bed at last, unresolved, angry with himself, angry with Salome, angry with his uncle, and angry with the baby who was sobbing in the nursery.

Philip's experiences had all been made in spiral form; they were ever turning about himself, and though each revolution attained a higher level, it was still made about the same centre. There is a family likeness in minds as well as in noses and eyes and hair; and in this Philip resembled his aunt, but with the difference that he was governed by a strong sense of rectitude, and that nothing

would induce him to deviate from what he believed to be just, whereas his aunt's principles were flexible, and governed only by her own interests.

In these days in which we live, socialism is in the air, that is to say, it is talked of and professed, but whether by any is practised I am inclined to question. For socialism I take to mean everyone for everyone else, and no one for himself, and this is a condition contrary to the nature of man, for men are all more or less waterspouts, vortices, attracting to themselves whatever comes within their reach, and to be actuated by a centrifugal, not a centripetal force is the negative of individuality.

We stalk our way over the ocean, drawing up through our skirts every drop of water, every seaweed, and crab and fish and mollusc that we can touch, and whirl them round and round ourselves, and only cast them away and distribute them to others when they are of no more use to ourselves.

Every climatic zone through which Philip had passed had served to feed and build up the column of his self-esteem; the rugged weather in furnished lodgings, and the still seas into which he had entered by his uncle's death, and by his marriage. Nothing had broken it down, dissolved its continuity, dissipated its force.

At sea, when a vessel encounters a waterspout, it discharges ordnance, and the vibration of the atmosphere caused by the explosion snaps the column and it goes to pieces. But would the shock caused by the return of Uncle Jeremiah, and the loss of position and wealth that this entailed, suffice to break the pillar of self-esteem that constituted Philip Pennycomequick? Hardly; for though touched in many ways, he could hold up his head conscious of his rectitude; he had managed the mill admirably, kept the accounts accurately, adapted himself to the new requirements perfectly. He could, when called upon, give up his place, but he would march forth with all the honours of war.

CHAPTER XXXVII.
ON THE LAKE.

Mrs. Sidebottom had reached Lucerne very rumpled and dirty and out of temper, having travelled all night from Brussels, and having had to turn out and have her boxes examined at Thionville and Basle. She had scrambled through a wretched breakfast off cold coffee and a roll at Strasburg, at four o'clock in the morning, and

then had been condemned to crawl along by a slow train from Strasburg to Basle, and by another, still slower, from Basle to Lucerne. A night in a comfortable hotel had restored her wonderfully; and when she took her place under the awning in the lake steamer, with a ticket in her glove for Fluelen, which she insisted on calling Flew-ellen, she was in a contented mood, and inclined to patronize the scenery.

The day was lovely, the water blue, Pilatus without his cap, and the distant Oberland peaks seen above the Brunig Pass were silver against a turquoise sky.

'This,' said Mrs. Sidebottom, dipping into 'Murray's Handbook' to ascertain what it was proper to say—'this is distinguished above every lake in Switzerland, and perhaps in Europe, by the beauty and sublime grandeur of its scenery.'

Then past her drifted a party of English tourists, also with 'Murray' in their hands and on their lips. 'Oh, mamma!' exclaimed a young lady, 'this lake is of very irregular shape, assuming near its west extremity the form of a cross. Do you see? There is one arm, we are approaching another, and there is the leg.'

'My dear,' said her mother, 'don't say leg; it is improper; say stem.'

'And, mamma, how true "Murray" is!—is it not wonderful? He says that at this part the shores of the lake are undulating hills clothed with verdure, and dotted with houses and villas. He really must have seen the place to describe it so accurately.'

'Good gracious!' exclaimed Mrs. Sidebottom; and then, after a pause, 'Gracious goodness!'

Lambert Pennycomequick took no notice of his mother's exclamations, till a third 'gracious goodness,' escaping her like the discharge of a minute-gun at sea, called his attention to her, and he asked, 'Well, what is it?' As he received no answer, he said, 'I don't believe in that honey served up at breakfast. It is not honey at all, but syrup in which stewed pears have soaked.'

'Upon my word!' gasped Mrs. Sidebottom.

'What is the matter, mother? Oh yes, lovely scenery. By George, so it is. I believe it is all a hoax about chamois. I have been told that they knock goats on the head, and so the flesh is black, or rather dark-coloured, and it is served as chamois, and charged accordingly.'

'This is extraordinary!' exclaimed Mrs. Sidebottom.

'Yes—first rate,' said Lambert. 'Our Yorkshire wolds don't quite come up to the Alps, do they?'

But Mrs. Sidebottom was not lost in wonder at the beauty of the landscape, she was watching intently a gentleman in a light suit, of a military cast, wearing a white hat and a puggaree, with moustache and carefully curled whiskers, who was marching the deck alongside of another gentleman, stout, ordinary-looking, and comfortable in appearance, like a plump bullfinch.

’Look at my watch!’ said the gentleman in the light suit, and as there were vacant places beside Mrs. Sidebottom, the two gentlemen left pacing the deck and seated themselves on the bench near her.

’Look at my watch!—Turned black, positively black, as if I had kept it against a vulcanized india-rubber stomach-belt. If you want evidence—there it is. I haven’t cleaned it. No, I keep it as a memorial to me to be thankful to the beneficent Heaven which carried me through—which carried me through.’

Mrs. Sidebottom saw a silver watch-case extended to be exhibited, the dingy colour that silver acquires when exposed to gas.

’I wish, sir—I beg your pardon, my lord—you will excuse me, but by accident—by the merest accident—I caught sight of your address and name on your luggage—I wish, my lord, I were going with you to Andermatt, and I would take you a promenade round the backs of the hotels, and let you smell—smell, my lord—as rich a bouquet of accumulated deleterious odours as could be gathered into one—odours, my lord, diphtheritical, typhoidiacal. You see my face—I have become mottled through blood-poisoning. I was gangrened at Andermatt by the deadly vapours there. I thank a merciful Heaven, with my strong constitution and by the warning afforded by my watch, I escaped death. I always carry about with me a silver timepiece, not one of gold, for sanitary reasons—the silver warns me of the presence in the atmosphere of sulphuretted hydrogen—of sewage gas—it blackens, as the arm of Lady Thingabob—I forget her name, perhaps she was of your lordship’s family—as the arm, the wrist of her ladyship, was blackened by the grip of a spectre. I see you are bound for the Hôtel du Grand Prince. I went there, and there I inhaled the vapours of death, or rather of disease. I moved to the Hôtel Impérial, and was saved. There, and there only, the drainage is after English models, and there, and there only are you safe from the fumes of typhoid, the seeds of typhus, the corpuscles of diphtheria, and the—the—the what-d’ye-call-ems of cholera. You will excuse my speaking to you, perhaps, forcing myself—unworthy—on your distinguished self.’

’Oh, certainly, certainly.’

’But when I saw your name, my lord, and considered what you are, and what the country would lose were you to run the risk unforewarned, that I ran, I ventured to thrust myself upon you.’

’I am really most obliged to you.’

’Well—who is it said ”We are all one flesh, and so feel sympathy one with another”? Having suffered, my lord, suffered so recently, and seeing you, my lord, you, you—about—but there—not another word, *Homo sum, nil humamim*—but I forget the rest, it is long since I was at school, and I have not kept up my classics.’

’I really am most indebted to you—and you think that the Hôtel Impérial—

—'

'I am sure of it. I had my blood tested, I had my breath analyzed. There were diatoms in one, and bacilli in the other, and—I am alive, alive to say it; thanks to the salubrious air and the careful nursing of the Hôtel Impérial.'

The nobleman looked nearly as mottled in countenance as the other; this was caused by the alarm produced by the revelations of his interlocutor.

'Don't you think,' he said, 'that I had better avoid Andermatt?'

'On no account, my lord. You are safe at the Imperial. I cannot say that you will be safe elsewhere. I have been to Berne to the University Professors to have the atmosphere of the several hotels analyzed for my own private satisfaction. It was costly—but what of that?—it satisfied me. These are the results: Hôtel du Cerf—three decimal two of sulphuretted hydrogen, two decimal eight of malarious matter, one, no decimal, of typhoidal germ. Hôtel de la Couronne d'Or—three decimal one of sulphuretted hydrogen, five decimal three of compound fermenting putrifio-bacteritic stuff. Hôtel du Grand Prince—eight decimal one of diphtheritic effluvium, occasional traces of scarlet-fever germs, and a trace—a trace of trichinus spiralis.'

'Good heavens!'—his lordship turned livid—'allow me, sir, to shake your hand; you have conferred on me a lasting favour. I shall not forget it. I was bound for the Hôtel du Grand Prince. What about the Impérial?'

'Nothing—all salubrious, mountain air charged with ozone, and not a particle of deleterious matter in it.'

'I shall certainly go there—most certainly. I had telegraphed to the Grand Prince; but, never mind, I had rather pay a forfeit and put up at the Imperial.'

'Would you mind, my lord, giving my card to the proprietor? It will ensure you receiving every attention. I was there when ill, and am pleased to recommend the attentive manager. My name is Yeo—Colonel Yeo—Colonel Beaple Yeo, East India Company Service, late of the Bombay Heavy Dragoons. Heavies we were called—Heavies, my lord.'

'Will you excuse me?' said the stout little nobleman; 'I must run and speak to my lady. 'Pon my word, this is most serious. I must tell her all you have been so good as to communicate to me. What were the statistics relative to the Grand Prince?'

'Eight decimal one—call it eight of diphtheritic effluvium, traces of scarlet-fever germs, and of trichinus spiralis. You know, my lord, how frightful, how deadly, are the ravages of that pest.'

'Bless me!' exclaimed his lordship, 'these foreigners—really they should not attempt to draw English—Englishmen and their families to their health resorts without making proper provisions in a sanitary way. Of course, for themselves, it doesn't matter; they are foreigners, and are impervious to these influences; or,

if not, and carried off by them—well, they are foreigners! But to English—it is outrageous! I'll talk to my lady.'

'Lambert,' said Mrs. Sidebottom in a low tone to her son, 'for goodness' sake don't forget; we must go to the Hôtel Impérial.'

But low as she had spoken, her neighbour in the light suit heard her, turned round and saw her. Not the least abashed, he raised his hat, and with a flush of pleasure exclaimed, 'Ah! how do you do, my dear madam—my dear, dear madam? This is a treat—a treat indeed; the unexpected is always doubly grateful.' He looked round to see that his lordship was out of hearing, and then said in a lower tone, 'You misconstrued me—you misinterpreted me. I had guaranteed you fifteen per cent., and fifteen per cent. you should have had. If you have lost it, it is through want of confidence in me—in me—in Colonel Beaple Yeo, of the Bombay Heavies. Had you trusted me—but ah! let bygones be bygones. However, an explanation is due. I writhe under the imputation of not being above-board and straight—straight as an arrow. But what can you do with a man like Mr. Philip Pennycomequick? The land-owners at Bridlington got wind of the plan. They scented Iodinopolis. Their greed was insatiable, they demanded impossible prices. There was nothing for it but for me to beat a retreat, make a strategic move to the rear, feign to abandon the whole thing, throw it up and turn my attention elsewhere. Then, when they were in a state of panic, my design was to reappear and buy the land on my own terms, not any more on theirs. Why, my dear madam, I would have saved the shareholders thousands on thousands of pounds, and raised the interest from perhaps a modest seven to twenty-five per cent., and a decimal or so more. But I was not trusted, the money confined to me was withdrawn, and others will make fortunes instead of us. I schemed, others will carry out my scheme. *Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes*, and you know the rest, *aratis boves*, and so on.'

Then Beaple Yeo stood up and handed his card to Mrs. Sidebottom, saying, 'You will at least do me this favour; give my card to the proprietor of the Hôtel Impérial, and he will care for you as for a princess of the blood royal.' Then he stalked away.

Mrs. Sidebottom turned dejectedly to her son. 'Lamb, I believe I was premature. After all, there was management in that affair. Of course his was the right way to bring those landowners to their knees. Let us take a turn.'

Beaple Yeo had now attached himself to another party of strangers—tourists, whose acquaintance he had probably made at an hotel in Lucerne; and he walked the deck with them. When they were fore, then Mrs. Sidebottom and her son were in the rear, but when they turned on their heels, then she turned also and walked aft, and heard their conversation during that portion of the walk. The subject was St. Bernard dogs, and apparently Beaple Yeo had some scheme

connected with them, which he was propounding.

'My dear sirs—when the St. Gothard tunnel is complete—answer me—what will become of the hospice? To what use can it be put? It will be sold for a song, as not a traveller will cross the mountain when he can pass under it. For a song—literally for a "song of sixpence." Now, can you conceive of a place more calculated by nature as a nursery of Mount St. Bernard dogs—and the necessary buildings given away—given for nothing, to save them from crumbling into ruin? There is a demand, a growing demand for Mount St. Bernard dogs, that only wants a little coaxing to become a perfect *furore*. We will send one as a present to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales. We will get in France an idea that the St. Bernard dog is a badge of the Republic, and that all true Republicans are bound to have Mount St. Bernard dogs. We will get some smart writers in America to dash off some sparkling articles in the illustrated magazines, and the demand becomes furious. Say the population of France is thirty-seven millions; actually it is more, and of these, two thirds—say twenty-five millions—are Republicans, and of these, one half are in a position to buy Mount St. Bernard dogs, and we fan the partisan fever to a height, by means of the press, which is easily done by dropping a few pounds into the hands of writers and proprietors. Say that one-third only of those in a position to buy the dogs, actually ask for them—that makes five millions of Mount St. Bernard dogs to be supplied to France alone. Then consider England, if it becomes the fashion there, and it will become the fashion, if the Princess of Wales accepts a dog from us, and walks about with one. Every lady of distinction, and then, in the next year, every servant-girl, will want a St. Bernard dog. And further—I have calculated that we can feed a dog at less than three farthings a day; say the total cost is a guinea. I have made inquiries and I find I shall be able to buy up the broken meat at a very low figure from the great hotels of Switzerland during the season. This will be conveyed to the hospice and there frozen. So it will keep and be doled out to the dogs daily, as required. Let us say that the interest on the outlay in purchasing the hospice and in maintaining the staff of dog-keepers be one guinea per dog; that makes the total outlay two guineas on each pup, and a pup a year old we shall not sell under ten pounds. Now calculate the profit for yourself—eight pounds a dog, and four millions supplied to France alone to enthusiasts for the Republic, and quite two millions to England to those who imitate her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, and seven millions to the United States for Americans who copy French or English fashions, and you have a total of thirteen millions of dogs at eight pounds each, a clear profit of one hundred and twenty-five millions. If we put the matter in decimals——'

The party turned and were before Mrs. Sidebottom. She could not hear what followed.

'My dear Lamb,' whispered she, 'did you hear that? What a chance! What a head the colonel has!'

At the next revolution Mrs. Sidebottom heard something more about the dog scheme.

'You see, gentlemen, the splendid thing is that the dogs suffer from pulmonary complaints when in the plains, and will not breed away from the eternal snows—two great advantages to us. Shares—preference shares at ten pounds—are to be subscribed in full, others as called in at intervals of six months. I myself guarantee fifteen per cent., but as you see for yourselves, gentlemen, the scheme cannot fail to succeed and the profits will be overwhelming.'

'Are you going on to Andermatt?' asked one of the gentlemen walking with Beaple Yeo.

'No, sir, I have had a bad attack; you can see the traces in my face. I will also show you my watch, how it was blackened. I have been ordered by my medical advisers to cruise up and down the lake of the Five Cantons, and inhale the air off the water till I am thoroughly restored. By the way, if you are going to the Hôtel Impérial at Andermatt would you take my card to the proprietor? He is interested about the dogs.'

Beaple Yeo now crossed the deck to a party that was clustered together at the bulwarks with an opera glass that was passed from hand to hand. It consisted of a tall man with a broad-brimmed hat, bushy black whiskers, a white tie and clerical coat, his wife, his sister, and five daughters. A comfortable religiosity surrounded the group as a halo.

Beaple Yeo raised his hat. 'Beg pardon, sir, a clergyman?'

'Yes, I am.'

'And a dean, doubtless. You will excuse my interrupting you, but I have ventured here thinking you might like to know about a very remarkable movement after the Truth in Italy, in the heart and centre of ignorance and superstition. Count Caprili is the leading spirit. It is no use, sir, as no doubt you are aware, pulling at the leaves and nipping the extremities of the Upas, you must strike at the root, and that is what my dear friend Count Caprili is doing. He is quite an evangelist, inspired with the utmost enthusiasm. I have here a letter from him descriptive of the progress the Truth is making in Rome—in Rome itself. It is in Italian; do you read Italian, sir?'

'N—no, but, mother, can you?' to his wife.

'No, but Minny has learned it'—of a daughter, who reddened to the roots of her fair hair and allowed that if it were in print she might make it out.

'Never mind,' said Beaple Yeo, or Colonel Yeo as he now called himself, 'I can give you the contents in a few words. A year ago his little congregation numbered twenty, it now counts one hundred and eighty-five, and at times even a

couple of decimals more. At this rate he reckons that the whole of the Eternal City will have embraced the Truth in twenty-five years and two months, unless the eagerness to embrace it grows in geometrical instead of arithmetical progression. In Florence and Turin the increase is even more rapid. Indeed, it may fairly be said that Superstition is undermined, and that the whole fabric will collapse. Between ourselves I know as a fact that the Pope when he heard of the success of Count Caprili attempted to commit suicide, and has to be watched day and night, he is such a prey to despair. You have perhaps seen my letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject; they appeared in some of the papers. Only one thing is needed to crown the whole movement with success, and that is money. The Count has urged me to act as his intermediary—secretary and treasurer—as regards England and America, and I shall be most happy to forward to him any contributions I may receive.'

'Dear me,' said the dean, 'this is most interesting. Have any of our bishops taken up the matter?'

'In letters that I have they express the deepest interest in it.'

'I shall be most happy to subscribe a sovereign,' said the dean, fumbling in his purse.

'And I also,' said his wife.

'And I as well,' put in his sister.

'I will note all in my book of contributions,' said Yeo, receiving the money, and finding to his disgust that he had been given twenty-franc, instead of twenty-shilling pieces. 'Would you mind, sir, if you go to—as I take it for granted you will—if you go to the Hôtel Impérial——'

'Ah! we were going to the Cerf.'

'That is a very third-rate inn, hardly suitable for a dignitary of the Church. But if you will take my card, Beaple Yeo, of the Bombay Heavies, to the proprietor of the Hôtel Impérial, he will treat you well, and be reasonable in his charges. He is most interested in the movement of Signor Caprili, and is a convert, but secretly; ask him about the movement, and he will open to you; show him my card, and he will confide his religious views to you.'

'I am most obliged. We will certainly go to the Imperial. Ah, mamma! here we are at the landing-place.'

As Mrs. Sidebottom left the boat at the station which she called Flue-ellen, she held out her hand to Colonel Yeo.

'I hope bygones will be bygones,' she said. 'I will take some shares in the

St. Bernard dogs—preference shares, please.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN HÔTEL IMPÉRIAL.

Salome had found her sister at the Imperial Hotel at Andermatt. Janet was one of those persons whose bodily condition varies with their spirits. When depressed, she looked and indeed felt ill; when happy, she looked and felt as if nothing were the matter with her. Janet had been greatly tried by the double shocks of her husband's death and the discovery of her parentage. She had been taken into the secret because it could not be kept from her, when the man Schofield, *alias* Beaple Yeo, suddenly arrived at Mergatroyd, just after the flood and the disappearance of Jeremiah Pennycomequick, at the time when she was sharing her mother's room instead of Salome.

Mrs. Cusworth at that time was in great distress of mind at the loss of her master and friend; and when her brother-in-law, the father of the two girls whom she had brought up as her own, unexpectedly appeared and asked for money and clothing, she confided her difficulty to Janet, and between them they managed to bribe him to depart and leave them in peace. Mrs. Cusworth had sacrificed a large slice out of her savings to secure his departure, and trusted thereby to get rid of him for ever.

When Janet returned to France, she found everything in confusion; the factory at Elboeuf was stopped, the men who had been employed in it had assumed arms against the Germans, and were either shot, taken captive, or dispersed. Her sister-in-law was almost off her head with excitement and alarm for her children, three girls just out of school. Prussian officers had been quartered in her house, and had carried off some of her valuables, and ransacked the cellar for the best wines.

Janet had caught cold that night in the train when it was delayed by the flood, on the way to Mergatroyd, and it had settled on her chest, and left a cough that she could not shake off. Anxiety and worry had told on her joyous disposition, and deprived it of its elasticity. She gave way to discouragement. Her husband's affairs were unsettled, and could not be put to rights till the war and the results of the war were over, and the current of ordinary business commenced its sober, even flow.

She had been ordered to Mentone for the winter, and then to spend the summer high up in the Alps, where the air was pure and bracing. She had come, accordingly, to Andermatt, and her sister-in-law had sent her three school-girl daughters to be with her; to look after her, Madame Labarte had said; to be looked after by her, Janet found was expected. They were nice enough girls, with simple minds, but it was a responsibility imposed on Janet at a time when she required complete relaxation from care.

At Andermatt the fresh air was rapidly restoring Janet to her normal condition of cheerfulness, and was giving her back the health she lacked, when her father arrived, impecunious, of course, and let her understand that he had come there to be supported by her, and to get out of her what he could. It would have been bad enough to have this dreadful man there posing as her father had she been alone. It was far worse with the three girls, her nieces, under her charge, and in her dismay she had a relapse, and wrote off to Salome an agonizing entreaty to come to her aid.

Janet had been left comfortably off, but till her husband's affairs were settled it was not possible for her to tell what her income would really amount to. The factory was again working, a competent overlooker had been found, and a suitable working partner taken into the firm to carry it on. In all probability Madame Baynes would be very well off, but at present she had not much ready money at her disposal.

Mr. Schofield, or Colonel Yeo, as he pleased to call himself now, was a different-looking man at this time to the wretched object who had presented himself at Mergatroyd, asking for clothing and cash, rather more than a year ago—indeed, eighteen months ago. He was well dressed, trim, held himself erect, and assumed a military air and some pomposity, as though the world were going well with him. He had carried away a little, but only a very little, of the plunder from Bridlington, and he knew very well that what he had would not last him long. It was satisfactory to have a well-to-do daughter to fall back on, whose purse he could dip his fingers into when they itched. But Beaple Yeo could not be idle. He had an active mind and a ready invention, and he began operations on his own account, partly as tout on the lake steamers for the Hôtel Impérial at Andermatt, receiving a fee for every tourist he sent to it, and partly by his speculations in dogs and missionaries. Janet would have run away from Andermatt, but for the three encumbrances, whom it would not have been easy to move to a secret and precipitate flight without explanations to them or their mother—explanations which would have been awkward; moreover, she feared that it would be unavailing, as her father could easily discover the way she had gone and follow her. There were only three passes in addition to the road up from Amsteg by which she could leave, and it would not be possible for her to

depart by any of these routes unknown to Colonel Yeo. Her first alarm and uneasiness abated when he took himself off to tout on the lake; and she resolved on remaining where she was till Salome came and gave her advice what course to pursue.

Salome decided that it was the best policy to remain where they were, and not attempt flight. She saw that her sister was suffering, and she determined to remain with her, to protect and comfort her, and await what the future had in store for herself. She naturally felt a great longing to be at home with her baby, but at the same time she recognised that the situation at home was not tolerable, that some change must take place before she could return to Mergatroyd.

One day, Colonel Yeo was in the *salle-à-manger* at the Hôtel Impérial preparing for *table d'hôte*, when a lady entered, well dressed, dark haired, with fine eyes, and swept up the room towards an alcove where were small tables, at which either a party sat that desired to be alone, or tourists not intending to dine at *table d'hôte* but *à la carte.* She walked slowly, with a certain dignity, and attracted all eyes. Every head was turned to observe her, and her eyes, in return, passed over as mustering and apprising those who occupied their seats at the table. She accepted the homage of interest she excited, as though it were her own.

What was her age? She had arrived at that period of life at which for some time a woman stands still—she was no girl, and no one could say that she was *passée.*

'Waiter!' called Colonel Yeo.

'Yes, sir—in a minute, sir.'

'Who is that lady in the gray dress with red trimmings?'

'Gray dress, sir? The stout lady with the little husband?'

'Nonsense, that distinguished lady—young—there at the table in the alcove.'

'Yes, sir—don't know, sir. Will inquire.'

Off skipped the waiter to carry round the soup, and forgot to inquire.

'Waiter!' called Colonel Yeo to another, the head *garçon.* 'Who is that prepossessing young lady, yonder?'

'Lady, sir? Don't know her name—I have seen her often everywhere, at Homburg, Baden-Baden, Milan.'

'What is she?'

'Do you mean of what nation, sir?—I believe American. Said to be very rich—worth millions.'

'Worth millions!' echoed Colonel Yeo. 'Can I change my seat and get near her?'

During dinner Colonel Yeo could not keep his eyes off her.

'Worth millions, and so good-looking!' Which would interest her most—his

dogs or his missionaries?—or could she be interested in himself?

He called for champagne. He put one arm over the back of his chair, held his champagne-glass in the other hand, and half turned, looked hard at the lady. She observed his notice of her, and their eyes met. Her eyes said as distinctly as eyes can speak, 'Look at me as much as you will, I expect to be admired, I do not object to be admired, I freely afford to all who take pleasure in beautiful objects the gratification of contemplating me. But who are you?'

'Waiter,' said Beaple Yeo, calling the head garçon, 'if—by chance that lady wants to know who I am—just say that I am Colonel Yeo, of the Bengal Heavies—a claimant for the Earldom of Schofield.'

At a table near that occupied by the lady sat Salome, Janet, and the three young girls Labarte. An arrangement had been come to with Yeo that he was not to associate with them, to hold aloof, and to receive money for doing this. He had got what he could, or could for the time being, out of his daughter Janet, and was therefore inclined to devote his energies to new arrivals.

'*Garçon*,' called the lady in gray and red.

'*De suite, m'selle*.'

'Who is that gentleman yonder, drinking champagne?'

'M'selle, the colonel! *c'est un milord*.'

'English?'

'But certainly.'

'Rich?'

'Rich! the colonel! rich! *Mon Dieu*! *C'est un milord Anglais*!'

'Is he staying here long?'

'Ah, m'selle! Where else could he stay? All the season.'

'What is his title?'

'*Mon Dieu*! I can't say—*Scoville*? *Scoville*? But yes, an earl—Comte de Scoville, I believe, m'selle.'

'Waiter—should he or anyone else inquire who I am, say an American—a millionaire, as I told you before.'

'He has already asked,' said the waiter, with a knowing look.

In the alcove where the lady sat at a table by herself was also a larger table, as already said, occupied by Janet and her party, and the lady in gray and red attracted the attention of the girls. These three girls were much alike; they ranged in age from sixteen to nineteen, had dark eyes and fresh cheeks, looked a mixture of English and French blood, and though they spoke English with their aunt and Salome, they spoke it with a foreign accent, and when they talked to each other naturally fell into French.

They were not beautiful, were undeveloped girls without much character apparently. The strange lady evidently exercised their minds, and they looked a

good deal at her, and passed low remarks to each other concerning her. Their curiosity was roused, and when she was not at her place they searched the visitors' book for her name, and for some information about her.

'*Ma tante*,' pleaded the eldest, 'which do you think she is of all these on this page?'

'*Mais*, Claudine, how can I tell?'

'Oh! *Ma tante*, do ask the waiter.'

'But why, Claudine? She does not interest me.'

'Oh, we are so puzzled about her; she looks so aristocratic and dresses so well, and has so many changes. She must employ a Parisian milliner. Oh, we do wish we knew where she got that charming walking-dress of gray and gold.'

'*Garçon!*' Janet Baynes called a waiter. 'Who is the lady who sits at this little table here?'

'Madame—a rich American, a millionaire, of New York.'

'A millionaire!'

The heads of the young ladies went together, and as the lady entered all their eyes watched her with eagerness—so beautiful, so distinguished-looking, so wealthy.

'What is her name, waiter?'

'Mademoiselle Du Rhame.'

'A French name?'

'Ah, madame, it stands there in the visitor's book,' and he pointed to Artemisia Durham, Chicago, U.S.A.

It was not possible for the American lady to fail to observe the interest she excited in the young girls. She saw their heads go together, then fly apart when she appeared; at table she caught their dark eyes watching her, and when they saw that they were noticed, away flew their eyes like scared birds. Miss Durham condescended to look at the girls with a half smile; she did not object to their admiration, and she did not court it.

What was more remarkable than the interest awakened in those children was that which she certainly aroused in Salome. There was a something, a mystery, a fascination in the woman that held Salome and drew her towards the stranger. She felt that this woman was her reverse in every particular, a woman with experience and knowledge of the world, with a power of making herself agreeable when she chose, and to whomsoever she chose. Salome had spent her life in a very narrow sphere, had made few acquaintances, had not had wide interests, and though she was well educated, had no extended range of ideas. Her position had ever been uncertain; she had been neither a member of the lower artisan class, nor accepted as an equal by those belonging to the upper class—that is, the employing class in Mergatroyd. Her mother had been housekeeper

to Mr. Pennycomequick, and consequently she had not been received as a lady by such as regarded themselves as the ladies of Mergatroyd—the manufacturers' wives and daughters, and those of the doctor, and the solicitor, and the parson. This ambiguity of position had in one manner made her strong and independent in character, but in another, timid and reserved. Where she knew she had duties to perform, there she acted without hesitation; but in social matters, in everything connected with life in the cultured world, with its fashions and etiquettes, she was doubtful and uncomfortable. She was now in the presence of a woman who moved with self-consciousness and assurance in that very sphere in which Salome was bewildered; consequently she watched Miss Durham with wonder, interest, and a desire to know her, and wrest her secret from her. That she was a good woman and worth knowing, deserving of confidence and regard, Salome never doubted. Guileless herself, she believed everyone else to be without guile.

When Janet Baynes thought that the girls had been too forward, almost discourteous in staring at the stranger, she looked apologetically at Miss Durham, who met the look with a smile that said, plainly as words, 'Allow them to stare at me—it amuses them and does not hurt me—they may profit by a study of me. Queens of beauty, of fashion, or of wealth expect to be looked at.' Then Mrs. Baynes smiled in reply, and her smile said, 'Indeed, I cannot wonder at these girls admiring you, for you are deserving of admiration.'

Whether this conversation of glances would have gone any further may be doubted, had it not been that the French-speaking waiter who had attended on the ladies, disappeared. Whether he was taken ill, or whether, caught doing wrong, he had been dismissed, or whether he had been enticed elsewhere by a higher wage, nobody knew and nobody cared to ask. Waiters are no more thought about by guests than are the mules and horses employed on expeditions. He was succeeded by a German, or German-Swiss who could not speak French, and only an unintelligible English; and the demoiselles Labarte and Madame Baynes on principle would not have asked for a bit of bread in German had they known how to do so. Salome knew little or no German, and the ladies were in difficulties. Claudine was out of sorts—somewhat feverish, but nothing serious—and her aunt advised that she should drink *orgeat* instead of wine. The waiter was puzzled. '*Ach! eine Drekorgel. Freilich, freilich, bestelle gleich,*' and he rushed off to find an organ-grinder with a marmot.

Then Miss Durham good-naturedly interfered, allayed the wrath of the ladies at the inherent Teutonic stupidity which never can do right, and ordered what was really required.

The *orgeat* broke the ice, conversation began, and next day the American lady was seated at the same table as the Labartes, with Salome and Janet. It would be impossible for the latter to get on with the stupid, stubborn German waiter,

unassisted by someone who was able to speak and understand the language of barbarians. At first there was but the exchange of ordinary courtesies, but now that the three girls were able to speak to the stranger, they hardly contained their attentions within ordinary bounds; they rivalled each other who should gain pre-eminent favour with the lady who wore such charming toilettes.

The girls were triumphant; they had formed the acquaintance; that was the one advantage that grew out of a German waiter. Salome was pleased she could now learn of this brilliant accomplished woman; and Janet was satisfied because she was feeling dull herself, and wanted a lively companion to relieve the tedium.

Miss Durham had plenty to say for herself. She was clever, amusing, interesting. She had seen much of the world—knew most watering-places, baths, and health-resorts in Europe. The meals, which had passed somewhat heavily before, now became gatherings full of liveliness. Janet brisked up, felt better in health and looked quite well, proposed excursions and schemed picnics. The whole party now found so much to talk about that they were reluctant to leave the table. Suddenly a pallor and tremor came over Mrs. Baynes. She looked up. Beaple Yeo was standing, white hat in hand, with the puggaree trailing on the floor, near the table.

'I take the liberty,' he said; 'introduce me.'

Janet looked at Salome, and Salome at Janet.

'I see,' said Yeo; 'my relatives are in doubt how to introduce me whilst my claim is being presented in the Upper House. Call me Colonel Yeo, of the Bengal Heavy Dragoons. Hang my title! I shall find the coronet heavy enough when it is fitted to my brow; the eight pearls—eight pearls; and as many strawberry-leaves—strawberry-leaves. I will not assume my title till it is adjudged to me by the House of Lords. You know your history of England. The attainder was for rebellion, and I now reassert my claim to the Earldom of Schofield.'

'And I,' said the American lady, 'am Artemisia Durham, of Chicago.'

CHAPTER XXXIX.

TWO WOMEN.

'You will excuse me, I know you will,' said Yeo, looking from one to another, but especially at the American, 'but I have just been informed that there are chamois visible on a mountain shoulder, high, high, high up—and as there is an excellent

telescope—a telescope—outside, I thought I would make so bold as to interrupt an animated conversation to bring to your notice this interesting fact.'

'Thank you—I do not wish to see chamois,' said Salome slowly and coldly.

'Nor I—I do not care to expose myself to the sun,' said Janet.

'Oh, aunt! oh, aunt! But they are so shy, so rare!' from the three Labarte girls.

'Really, for my part,' said Miss Durham, 'I am curious to see them. Though I have been before in the Alps I have never had the good fortune——'

'Then allow me to conduct you!' exclaimed Colonel Yeo gallantly.

'Thank you, sir, I can find the telescope myself,' answered the American lady. Then, to her companions: 'You will excuse my running off. I really am desirous of seeing chamois.'

She sailed through the *salle-à-manger*, with Beaple Yeo prancing after her, hat in hand, and puggaree waving. The Labartes looked at their aunt pleadingly.

'Very well, girls; if you wish, go after Miss Durham,' and away scampered the three.

'Oh, Salome!' sighed Janet, 'I cannot bear him! He promised not to interfere with us.'

Salome sighed also. 'We must bear with him a little longer. He will find this place dull and take himself off.'

'But, Salome, what does he mean about being Earl of Schofield? About the pearls and strawberry-leaves?'

'Money—of course—always money.'

'I wish I had not let the girls go after him—to the telescope.'

'It is a pity—but Miss Durham is there.'

'Yes, and with her they are safe. You like her?'

'I admire her. I think I like her. If I were a man I should fall madly in love with her, but——'

'But what, Salome?'

'My dear, I don't know.'

In the meantime Beaple Yeo was adjusting the telescope, peering through it, and pressing on Miss Durham to look just at one point. 'Ah! quick—before they move.' Then asking if the sight were right, peering again, wiping the lens with his silk handkerchief, and finally when either the chamois had disappeared, or the focus could not be got right, abandoning the telescope altogether to the three girls.

'One, two, three churches here,' said Mr. Yeo. 'And one a pilgrimage chapel. You have perhaps seen some friars in snuff-coloured habits prowling about. Shocking, is it not? Signor Caprili—you have heard of the extraordinary efforts he is making to spread the Truth, the naked Truth—I mean, I beg pardon,

the unvarnished Truth. Are you interested in missionary enterprise?'

'Not in the least. Superstition is charmingly picturesque. How gracefully those towers and spires stand out against the mountains! And that chapel perched on a rock. I would not have it abolished for the world. We have not such things in America—we come to the Old World to see them.'

'Then, perhaps dogs,' said Yeo. 'You are interested in Mount St. Bernard dogs, and would, no doubt, like to introduce one across the ocean to your fellow-countrywomen. Magnificent creatures, and so noble in character! How their heroism, their self-sacrifice, their generosity, stand out in contrast with our petty human vices! Verily I think we might with advantage study the dog. I do not mind confiding to you, madam, that a colossal scheme is on foot for the establishment of an emporium of these noble creatures, and that money only is needed to float it.'

'I assure you,' said Miss Durham, 'I am not in the least interested in dogs.'

'Not as a speculation?'

'Not even as a speculation.

Beaple Yeo was silenced.

'Excuse me,' said Miss Durham, 'you were saying something about strawberry-leaves—the wild Alpine strawberry is delicious.'

'Oh! you misunderstand me,' said Yeo, elevating himself to his full height, removing his hat, shaking the puggaree, and putting on his hat again; 'I was alluding to the coronet of an earl to which I lay claim.'

'Then you are not an earl yet?'

'I am not one, and yet I am one. The earldom of Schofield was attaindered—attaindered at the Jacobite rebellion. My great-grandfather took the wrong side and suffered accordingly—suffered ac—cor—ding—ly. The attainder was but for a while. Preston Pans was 1745; Culloden, 1746, April the sixteenth, and my great-grandfather's attainder next year, attainder for one hundred and twenty-five years—which lapses this year, one eight seven two. The earldom is secure—I have but to take it up—to take it up; in other words resume it, and Beaple Yeo is Earl Schofield.'

Salome and Janet appeared to call the three girls to them, and were a little surprised to find the colonel and the American young lady already on intimate terms. They were seated on a bench, side by side, and Colonel Yeo was gesticulating with his hand, and whisking his puggaree in explanation of the Schofield peerage claim; was following the genealogical tree on the palm of one hand with the finger of the other; was waving away objections with his hat, and clenching arguments by clapping both hands on his knees. He was a man so richly endowed by nature with imagination that he could not speak the truth. There are such men and women in the world—to whom romance and rhodomontade

is a necessity, even when no object is to be gained by saying what is not true. Some people embroider on a substratum of fact, but Beaple Yeo; and others of the like kidney, spin the threads and then weave their own canvas out of their own fancies, and finally embroider thereon as imagination prompts.

Darkness set in, that night as on every other, and most of the tourists had retired to bed, wearied with their walks and climbs, and those tarrying at Andermatt had also gone into the uncomfortable Swiss-German beds, tired with having nothing to do. Only two were awake, in separate wings of the hotel. One was Salome, the other the American stranger.

Salome had two candles lighted on the table, and had been writing to Philip. She sat now, looking through the open window at the starry sky, with pen in hand, uncertain how to continue her letter. She wrote to her husband every few days, and expected from him, what she received without fail, letters informing her of the health and progress of the baby. His letters were formal and brief. When about to write he visited the nursery, inquired whether there were particulars to be sent to Mrs. Pennycomequick, and wrote verbatim the report of the nurse. Salome had, indeed, only received two letters, and the last had surprised and overwhelmed her. It contained news of the reappearance of Mr. Jeremiah. Her delight had been exceeding; its excess was now passed, and she sat wondering what would be the result of this return on the fortunes of Philip, and on their relations to each other. Philip's letter had been silent on both these points. He merely stated that his uncle had returned, was in robust health, and added a brief account of the circumstances of his escape and recovery. Not a word in his letter about his desire to see her again, not a hint that he was ready to forgive the wrong unintentionally done him. Both letters were stiff and colourless as if they had been business epistles, and many tears had they called from Salome's eyes.

Very different were her letters to him. Without giving utterance to her love, every line showed that her heart yearned for her husband, her baby, and for home. She wrote long letters, hoping to interest him in what she and her sister were about; she described the scenery, the novel sights, the flowers—she even enclosed two forget-me-nots with a wish that he would lay one on her baby's lips. She made no allusion to the past, and she did not tell him of her present trouble with Beaple Yeo, her father. She shrank from informing him that the man he hated was at Andermatt, the terror and distress of her sister and herself. She had written a letter to Uncle Jeremiah, to enclose in that to her husband, and in that was not an expression which could lead him to imagine that her husband was estranged from her. She left this note open, that Philip might look at it if he pleased, before delivering it. She had broken off in the midst of her letter to Philip to write this, and now she resumed the writing to her husband. She was describing the hotel guests, and had come to an account of the Chicago heiress.

She had written about her beauty, her eyes, her carriage, her reputed wealth, only her dresses she did not describe, she knew they would not interest a man. Then she proceeded to give some account of her qualities of mind and heart, and thereat her pen was stayed. She knew nothing of either. She had imagined a good deal—but positively had no acquaintance with the lady on which to form an opinion.

What was there in the lady that so fascinated her? She was attracted to her, she felt the profoundest admiration for her—and yet she was unable to explain the reason of the attraction. It was the consciousness that in this stranger were faculties, experiences, knowledge she had not—it was an admiration bred of wonder. She had no ambition to be like her, and she was not envious of her—but she almost worshipped her, because she was strong in everything that she, Salome, was weak. That she was, or might be weak in everything wherein Salome was strong never occurred to her humble mind. Then, still holding her pen, and still looking dreamily into the night sky, Salome passed in thought to her own situation, rendered doubly difficult by her father having attached himself to her sister. She could not desert Janet under the circumstances. She must be at her side to protect her from his rapacity and insolence. And yet she yearned with all the hunger of a mother's heart for her baby, that she might clasp it to her and cover its innocent face and hands and feet with kisses. And Philip——. She loved him also, with the calm unimpassioned love that springs out of duty. She had liked him since first she saw him, and the liking had developed into love—a quiet, homely love, without hot fire in it, and yet a true, steady, honest love. She could not believe that her husband mistrusted her assurance that she had not knowingly deceived him. She did not know which was the most potent force acting on his mind—hatred of the man who was her father and anger at being unwittingly brought into relationship with him, or dread of the scandal that might come of the knowledge of the relationship. She had no confidence that her father would not become again involved in some disgraceful fraud which would bring his name before the public; and this dread, of course, must weigh on Philip as well. Beaple Yeo had already attempted to express money out of her. She was the wife of a rich Yorkshire manufacturer, and Janet was the widow of a rich Normandy manufacturer. He looked upon both as squeezable persons, only at first his efforts to squeeze had been directed upon Janet, who had not a husband to oppose him. Salome, however, saw that he would not be at rest till he had extorted money from Philip through her, and the dread of this kept her in constant unrest. How—she now asked herself, or the stars at which she was looking—how would the return of Jeremiah affect Philip's position and relieve her of this fear? If Jeremiah resumed the factory, then Philip would be no longer wealthy, and a prey for her father to fall upon.

As she sat thus, thinking and looking at the stars, so in the furthest wing of the same house was Artemisia Durham, also thinking and looking at the stars. She had extinguished her lights, and stood at the window. She was partly undressed, her dark hair flowed about her shoulders, and her arms were bare. She had her elbow resting on the window-sill, and her chin was nestled into her palm, her fingers clenched on her lips. Her brows were contracted into a scowl. The face was no longer set, haughty in its beauty, and yet with a condescending smile; it was now even haggard, and over it contending emotions played in the starlight, altering its expression, unresisted, undisguised.

She thought of the admiration she had excited in the schoolgirls, and in their elders, the two ladies in deep mourning. A flicker of contempt passed over her countenance.

What was the admiration of three half-grown girls to her? Salome had attracted her notice more than Janet. She had observed Salome, whilst unseen by her, and thought she had made out her character—ordinary, duty-loving, conscientious, narrow. A character of all others most distasteful to Artemisia. She put her hands to her brow and pressed them about it. 'So, so,' she muttered. 'To have always an iron crown screwed tight round the brain. Insufferable!'

Then she shivered. The night air was cold in the Alps at that elevation. She fetched a light shawl of Barège wool and wrapped it round her, over her bare arms, and leaned both elbows of the folded arms on the window. Her thoughts again recurred to Salome, and she tried to scheme out the sort of life that would commend itself to such as she—a snug English home, with a few quiet, respectable servants, and a quiet, respectable gardener; a respectable and quiet husband, and a pony-trap, in the shafts of which trotted a quiet and respectable cob; improving magazines and sober books read in the house; occasional dull parties given, at which the clergy would predominate, and sing feeble songs and talk about their parishes; and then one or two quiet, respectable children would arrive who would learn their lessons exactly, and strum on the piano at their scales. Artemisia's lips curled with disgust.

Her hands clenched under the shawl, and she uttered an exclamation of anger and loathing.

And what, she considered, had she herself to look to? She gazed dreamily at the stars, and tears rose in her eyes and trickled down her cheeks. Then, ashamed of her weakness, she left the window and paced her room—up and down, up and down—and it was as though through the open window, out of the night, streamed in dark forms, ugly recollections, uncomfortable thoughts, that crowded the room, filled every corner, occupied every nook—came in thicker, and darker, and more horrible, and she went to the window with a gasp of fear and shut out the night wind and the gleam of the stars, hoping at the same time

to stop the entry of those haunting memories and hideous shapes.

The street window would not shut them out; the room was full of them, and their presence oppressed her. She could endure them no more. She struck a light and kindled the candles in the room.

What was that on her dressing-table? Only a little glass full of wild strawberry-leaves and fruit one of the admiring Labarte girls had picked and given to her and insisted on her taking to her room.

Artemisia laughed. She took the strawberries out of the water. She unclasped a necklet that was about her throat on which were Roman pearls. She put it around her head, and thrust the strawberry-leaves in between the pearls, then looked at herself in the glass and laughed, and as she laughed all the shadow-figures and ghostly recollections went tumbling one over the other out of the room by the keyhole, leaving her alone laughing, part ironically, part triumphantly, before the glass, looking at herself in her extemporized coronet.

CHAPTER XL.

TWO MEN.

If Jeremiah Pennycomequick supposed that he could slip back into the old routine of work without attracting much attention, and without impediment, he was quickly undeceived. His reappearance in Mergatroyd created a profound sensation. Everyone wanted to see him, and everyone had a hearty word of welcome. He was surprised at the amount of feeling that was manifested. He had lived to himself, seen little society, nevertheless he suddenly discovered that he had been popular. Everyone with whom he had been connected in however small a way respected him, and showed real pleasure at his return. The men at the mill—factory hands—would shake hands again and yet again, their honest and somewhat dirty faces shining with good will; the factory girls came about him with dancing eyes and 'Eh! but ah'm reet fain to see thee back agin!' The little tradespeople in Mergatroyd—the chemist, the baker, the grocer, ran out of their shops when he passed, to give a word of congratulation. The brother manufacturers—those who had been rivals even—called to see him and express their pleasure. The wives also dropped in—they could not await the chance of seeing him, they must come to his house and both see the man returned from the dead, and learn from his own lips why he had made them all believe he had perished. To all he gave the same

account—he had been ill, and when he recovered found that he was already adjudged dead, and he resolved not to undeceive his relatives till he had seen how his nephew 'framed'—that is the word he used—an expressive Yorkshire word that means the fitting and shaping of a man for a place new to him.

Near Mergatroyd was a spring of water called 'California.' It had its origin thus. The owner of a field fancied there was coal beneath the surface, and he hired borers who perforated the several strata that underlay his turf till they were stopped by the uprush of water, that played like a fountain for many months and remained as a permanent spring. The owner had made great boast of the fortune he was going to make out of his coal mine, and when he came on nothing but water the people nick-named this spring California. But it was no ordinary spring; the water was so charged with gas that when a little match was held to it, flames flashed, and flickered about it. The water was so soft as to be in great request for tea-making. 'Eh,' said an old woman, 'Californey water be seah (so) good, tha wants nowt but an owd kettle and t'water to mak' th' best o' tea.'

It seemed to Jeremiah as if he had tapped a California, a fountain of sweet, flashing, abounding affection. He was moved, flattered by it, and greatly surprised, for it was wholly unanticipated. He was ignorant what he had done to occasion it.

But, indeed, a great deal of genuine regard and attachment grows imperceptibly about a man who has lived for a long time in a place without making any demands on his neighbours; has been just, reliable, and blameless in life. All this latent regard now manifested itself.

Philip was still in the house of his uncle a week after the reappearance of the latter. Jeremiah had not been able to go through the accounts and examine the condition of the business as thoroughly as he had intended. He had been distracted by visitors, and his mind unsettled by absence and by astonishment and gratification at the manifestation of good-will provoked by his return. He had said nothing more to Philip about leaving; Philip, however, had been in the little town inquiring for lodgings, but could find nothing that would suit. In that small place it was not usual for furnished lodgings to be let. There was indeed a set of rooms over the baker's, but they were overrun by cockroaches; at the chemist's were two vacant rooms, but no accommodation for the nurse and baby. Then he had to face another difficulty: the nurse was young and good-looking, and there was no saying what scandal might be aroused by his migrating to lodgings with this nurse, if his wife did not return to him. At the draper's there were rooms, but they had a north aspect, and looked cold and damp. There was a cottage, unfurnished, he might take, but that adjoined a shoddy mill, and the atmosphere was clouded with 'devil's dust,' injurious to the lungs. Moreover, how could he purchase furniture when he had no money? His condition was uncertain, his

prospects undefined, and he shrank from speaking to his uncle about them till Jeremiah had made his thorough investigation of the state of the business and had matured his opinion on Philip's management of it. Perhaps, also, Jeremiah had not as yet decided on what was to be done with regard to his nephew, and it would be injudicious to press him to a decision. In the meantime the uncertainty was distressing to Philip.

He read his wife's letters with mingled feelings. He could decide nothing with respect to her till his own future was made clear to him. He still harboured his resentment against the imposition, and, though he now no longer thought that Salome had been privy to it, he could not surmount the repugnance evoked by the fact of being related to that unprincipled rogue, Schofield. He was alive to the danger of such an alliance. Schofield was not the man to neglect the advantages to be gained by having a son-in-law—a man of character, position and substance. If Philip sank to being a mere clerk the fellow would be an annoyance no more, but as he prospered, and in proportion as he made his way, gained the respect of his fellow-men, and enlarged his means, so would his difficulties with Schofield increase. The fellow would be a nuisance to him continually. If Schofield made himself amenable to the law, then his own connection with the daughter of a man in prison or a convict, would be a reproach and a scandal. If the scoundrel were at large, he would be an annoyance from which he never could hope to shake himself free.

The letters from his wife did not please him. Clearly Janet was not so ill as had been represented to him; not so ill as to require her sister there, especially as she had three nieces with her. He was uncomfortable without his wife—he was uncomfortable because his future was vague, and he associated the annoyance this caused him with her absence, and put it, unconsciously, to her account. He did not consider what his own conduct had been, and how he had almost driven her from the house and from her child, and he found fault with her for deserting him and the babe so readily on a frivolous excuse.

No doubt Salome was enjoying herself; she was so full of admiration over the scenery, the flowers, so struck with the variety of life she met with. What did she think of his situation without certain prospects? A nice party they formed at Andermatt—the five ladies—and Janet was well enough to enjoy excursions. The efforts Salome made to interest him annoyed him. He did not want to be interested; he resented her taking interest in what she saw.

And then, what about this stranger, this American lady, travelling by herself, with her pretty becoming dresses, who had attached herself to the party? Who was she? What were her belongings? What her character? Salome had no right to form a friendship, hardly an acquaintance, without first consulting him. It was very doubtful whether a lady, young and beautiful, who travelled

alone, was a desirable person to know; it was by no means unlikely that Salome would find out, when too late, that she had associated herself, and drawn the three Labarte girls into acquaintanceship with a woman who ought to be kept at a distance. Ladies travelling alone should invariably be regarded with suspicion. Ladies never ought to be alone—unmarried ones, he added hastily, remembering that he had allowed his own wife to make the journey to Andermatt unprotected. Unmarried ladies belong to families, and travel with their mothers or aunts, or some female relation; if quite young they go about in flocks with their governess. Single ladies! He shook his head. Salome really was inconsiderate. She acted on impulse, without thought. If she had been forced into conversation with this person she should have maintained her distance, and next day have contented herself with a bow, and the day after have been short-sighted, and not observed her at all. That was how he had behaved towards male acquaintances whom he did not think worth cultivating as friends. Acquaintances can always be dropped. The hand can be rigid when grasped for a shake, or can be twisting an umbrella, or be behind the back, or in a pocket.

Salome should have considered in making friends that there were others to be thought of besides herself, and that he radically disapproved of association with persons unattached.

In the last of the three letters he had received from his wife a whole side had been taken up with description of the single lady; it was obvious that this person, whoever she was, had set herself to gain influence over Salome, whilst Salome, inexperienced, was unable to resist, and the purpose of the stranger she did not divine. He became irritated at the expressions used by his wife concerning this fascinating stranger. He entertained a growing aversion for her. He was quite sure that she was not a proper person for Salome to associate with.

He took up the letter, and putting his hands behind his back, paced the room. He was thoroughly out of humour with himself and with his wife, and as it never occurred to him that he should vent his dissatisfaction on himself, he poured it out on Salome.

A tap at the door, and following the tap in came Jeremiah.

'Look here!' exclaimed the old man as he entered. 'Here is a pretty kettle of fish. When is Salome returning?'

'I do not know,' answered Philip stiffly.

'Have you heard from her?'

'I have.'

'And she says nothing about returning?'

'Not a word. She seems to be enjoying the Alpine air and scenery—and making friends.' There was a tone of bitterness in these last words.

'But—she must return,' said Jeremiah. 'There is an upset of the whole bag

of tricks. What do you suppose has happened?'

'I have not the least idea.'

'The cook had fits yesterday; that was why the dinner was spoiled. She has fits again to-day, and there will be no dinner at all. She has turned the servants out of the kitchen; they are sitting on the kitchen stairs, and she is storming within—and—I am convinced that the fits are occasioned by brandy. I sent her some yesterday when I was told she was in convulsions, and that was adding fuel to fire. It is a case of D.T., I fear. There is a black cat in the kitchen—or she thinks so, and is hunting it, throwing kettles and pots and pans at it—has smashed the windows, and most of the crockery. The maids are frightened. I have sent for the police; come with me. We must break open the kitchen door, and seize and bind the mad creature.'

'It will put us in a somewhat ridiculous position,' said Philip. 'Had we not better wait till the constable arrives, and hand her over formally to him?'

'And in the meantime allow her to smash everything the kitchen contains. Come on.'

The old man led the way, and Philip, first plucking at his shirt-collars to make sure they were right, followed. They found, as Jeremiah had said, the servants on the steps that descended to the kitchen. The nurse was also there.

'How came you here?' asked Philip—'and baby, too!—is this a place for him? Go back to the nursery.'

There was indeed an uproar in the kitchen. The cook was as one mad, howling, cursing, dashing about and destroying everything she could lay hand on—like the German Polter-geist.

Jeremiah burst the door open, and the two men entered.

Fortunately for Philip's dignity, the constable arrived at the same time, and the crazy woman was without difficulty and disarrangement of Philip's collars, controlled and conveyed to her bedroom.

As the party of men with their redfaced captive ascended the steps from the kitchen, Philip caught sight of the nurse and baby again. The former had disobeyed his orders; it was perhaps too much to expect of her to retire beyond sight of the drama enacted in the kitchen. Philip gave her notice to leave.

'This would never have happened had Salome been here,' said Jeremiah. 'And this is not all; that woman has found means of getting to my cellar, and she has drunk herself into this condition on my best whisky and brandy. I have only just discovered the ravages she has made.'

'I gave you the cellar key.'

'Yes; but she had another that fitted the lock. I have had Mrs. Haigh here; she has opened my eyes to a thing or two. Are you aware that the parlour-maid and my traveller Tomkins have been carrying on pretty fast? She asked leave to

go to a funeral on Sunday, and went instead with Tomkins to Hollingworth Lake. They were seen there together in a boat.'

'There is something wrong,' said Philip, 'something I do not understand, about the washing. I do not know whether any account is kept of what goes to the wash, but I am quite sure that the wash consumes as much as it restores. I am reduced this week to one pocket-handkerchief. I cannot understand it. If I had had an influenza cold during the last fortnight I could see some reason for my being short this week, but conceive the awkwardness of having only one. And then my socks. They come back full of holes. I used not to wear them into great chasms—at least not since I have been here; now they return as of old when I was in furnished lodgings—only fit to be employed as floor-cloths.'

'I'll tell you what, Philip. Salome must return. I have been told by Mrs. Haigh that she saw your nursemaid take the baby only yesterday to Browne's Buildings, and there is scarlet-fever in several of the cottages there.'

'I have dismissed her.'

'Who? Salome?'

'No, the nurse.'

'But the mischief is done. She was there yesterday. I do not know how many days it takes for scarlet-fever to incubate, but that the child will have it I have very little doubt. Why, she went into Rhode's cottage where they have had five down with it, and two of them died. The rest are just in that condition of healing when infection is most to be feared. I heard this from Mrs. Haigh.'

'Good heavens!' Philip was frightened.

'Then,' continued Jeremiah, 'I do not suppose you are aware that Essie, the nursemaid, has been wearing your wife's jewellery. She had the audacity to appear in church on Sunday with a pretty Florentine mosaic brooch that I gave Salome many years ago. Mrs. Haigh saw it and recognised it.'

Philip fidgeted in his chair. 'I see,' said he, 'I was wrong in not speaking or coughing the other night, or I might have sneezed, but I lacked the moral courage. I felt unwell and had a sick headache, and without saying anything to anyone I went to bed immediately after dinner. I may have been in bed half an hour and had dozed off when I was roused by seeing a light. I opened my eyes and observed Essie at the dressing-table. She had come into the room, not dreaming I was there, and she was trying on Salome's bonnets, I suppose the best, putting her head on this side, then on that, and studying the effect at the glass. I did not cough or sneeze, as I ought. I allowed her to leave the room in ignorance that she had been seen. I cannot remember now whether she went off with the bonnet on her head, or whether she replaced it. I did not announce my presence, because I was in bed, and I thought that my situation was even less dignified than hers. But I see, now, I ought to have coughed or sneezed.'

'Philip, we shall get into an awful muddle unless Salome returns.'

Philip said nothing.

'Now look here,' continued Jeremiah. 'I have heard that you have been looking out for lodgings. If you are going to live by yourself, that is tolerable; but if you choose to have your wife with you, you can live here and manage the factory and the house for me. I am tired of the drudgery of business, and I cannot, and will not, be worried to death by servants. I must have someone who will look after the factory for me, and someone who will attend to the house.'

'It would be best for Salome to return, but I am not sure that she is willing. She seems to be enjoying herself vastly.'

'Go after her; surprise her. Take the baby. Spend a month there and then return. Bring Janet back as well, if she cares to come.'

'Perhaps that will be best,' mused Philip. 'Things have become very uncomfortable without her—only one pocket-handkerchief, and my socks only get to be taken as floor-cloths.'

'Of course it is best. As soon as possible go, and don't return without her.'

CHAPTER XLI.

ONE POCKET-HANDKERCHIEF.

Philip Pennycomequick was on his way to Andermatt. He had come to an understanding with Uncle Jeremiah. His comfort, his well-being for the future depended on Salome. The old man had taken a fancy to spend his winters abroad, and he had no wish to remain tied to his business in smoky Mergatroyd. He was quite ready to make it over to Philip, but then Philip must first be reconciled to his wife, and bring her home to hold rule over the house. A Swiss nurse had been found ready to take the child and accompany Philip to Andermatt.

Philip did not travel in the same carriage as the nurse and child, but he saw to their lacking nothing. He occupied a compartment of a first-class carriage by himself, and thought a good deal about himself and his wife. And—first—it was particularly annoying to have only one pocket-handkerchief. The strictest inquiries had been made, but not more than the one in use could be discovered. The washerwoman insisted that she had received none, and the housemaid protested that she had given a dozen. Between the two they had disappeared, and Philip was obliged to purchase a half-dozen fresh silk ones; he would not buy more be-

cause he was resolved to get, with his wife's aid, at the bottom of the mystery, and recover the lost pocket-handkerchiefs, wherever they were. Unfortunately he was not aware how many he had had originally; but Salome knew—she had taken count of all his clothing, knew the number of his socks and also of his pocket-handkerchiefs. There was some excuse for the havoc wrought among the former, for the friction of boot heels and soles does destroy the texture of worsted socks, but no rubbing of noses injures the grain of silk pocket-handkerchiefs.

'I know,' said Philip, as the train drew up at Thionville, 'I know that when one has a cold, the secretion is acrid, but it is not sulphuric acid to burn holes in pocket-handkerchiefs. What? Turn out here, and have one's boxes examined? I will come to the bottom of that disappearance of pocket-handkerchiefs. I am put to intolerable discomfort. I hate wiping my nose with silk till it has been washed three or four times and become flexible, and has lost its harshness—it irritates the mucous membrane. I am going through, *voyez mon billet*! What nonsense examining one's baggage here! Salome will know how many handkerchiefs I had. I am glad I am going to Andermatt; it will set my mind at rest, and I can have these hateful new handkerchiefs washed there.'

But other matters occupied Philip's mind. He had his wife's letters—the last two—in his pocket, and he re-read them; the jolting of the train, the flicker of the light in the lamp overhead, made the reading difficult, and predisposed him to take umbrage at her expressions. What especially annoyed him was her praise of her new friend, the American lady, and it gave him satisfaction to conjure up before his imagination the scene of introduction of himself to her, and to picture himself, with frigid courtesy looking at her, raising his hat, stiffly bowing, and with cold words giving her to understand that her friendship with his wife was against his wishes, and must be discontinued. The places at *table d'hôte*, he supposed, were arranged according to priority. He would inform the waiter that as he came last, all his belongings, his wife, his sister-in-law, and her nieces must relinquish their seats and come down to the end of the table by him—that would separate his party from the ambiguous stranger. If, after dinner, she came to speak to his wife, he would offer Salome his arm and ask her to come a stroll alone with him.

There were many ways in which this person might be given to understand that she was no longer desired as an associate. A feeble sense of pity for her in her confusion at being shaken off stirred in his heart, and then died away.

He had not written to announce his intention of coming with the baby to Andermatt. He intended to surprise Salome. There would be something flattering to himself in the change of colour, the delight that would spring up in her eyes, the cry of recognition—then the humble hesitation, awaiting his permission to spring into his arms.

Throughout the journey Philip maintained his connection with the baby, though keeping it at a distance, as the sun holds the earth and swings it round it, but never allows the earth to approach it too closely. And as the moon revolves about the earth, so did the Swiss nurse dance attendance on Philip the Little, rotating also, of course, about Philip the Great.

On board the steamer, on the lake, Philip saw a gentleman in light suit, with helmet cap, surrounded by a puggaree, who attached himself to several groups of tourists, and showed them his blackened watch, or discoursed on the great evangelist of Italy, Signor Count Caprili; or on his scheme for rearing Mount St. Bernard dogs. He at once recognised the man, and he caught the fellow's eye on him; but Beaple Yeo made no attempt to renew acquaintance till Philip was in a carriage to make the ascent from Amsteg by the Devil's Bridge to Andermatt, when he jumped into the same vehicle, and held out his hand with a boisterous jollity.

'How d'ye do—do, Pennycomequick? Delighted to see you. Will find my daughter right and flourishing at the Hôtel Impérial. Of course, you go there. I was nearly killed at all of the others. Look at my silver watch-case—turned black with sulphuretted hydrogen. But, of course, you go where Sal is. Good girl! excellent girl! You made a first-rate choice when you took her, and you have my blessing. Mercy on me, that is my grandchild, I presume. To think of it—I a grandfather! If you will do me a favour, my boy, you will say nothing about our relationship. I don't want to be looked upon as a grandpa. Bless me! at my time of life a grandpa! I'll share the carriage with you—pay a third—no a quarter, as you are three, self, nurse, and baby.'

Philip became stiff and cold. He would not take the hand offered him, nor say a word to the man who had so unceremoniously entered his carriage. Beaple Yeo, alias Schofield, was by no means disconcerted.

'You will take my card,' he said. Then, when he saw that Philip would not do so: 'But no, I will introduce you myself, dear son-in-law, to the proprietor. Now do look at this zig-zag road. I remember seeing a marionette theatre when I was a child, and this scene was represented. A number of little carriages came running down the zig-zag one after another—and here it is—the same exactly. It is worth your looking. One, two, three—upon my word there are five carriages; and see how the horses tear along and swing round the corners. It is worth looking at.'

There are certain insects which, when handled, become rigid and take all the appearance of sticks. It was the same with Philip; the presence, the address of this odious man reduced or transmuted him into a bit of stick. He sat motionless with his umbrella between his knees, his hands resting on the handle, his neck stiff, and his eyes staring at a couple of buttons of unequal nature at the back

of the driver's jacket. He did not look at Beaple Yeo, nor at the zig-zags, nor at the descending train of five carriages, nor at the wondrous scenery. He was greatly incensed. It was intolerable that he should meet this man again, and that he should be near, if not with Salome. But this was one of the annoyances he must look on as inevitable, one that would continually recur. Really it was too bad of Salome not to have mentioned in one of her letters that her father was at Andermatt. If she had done that not 'all the king's horses, nor all the king's men,' would have got Philip to make that expedition to Andermatt. Finding that his son-in-law was indisposed to converse, the cheerful and loquacious colonel addressed the baby, screwed up his mouth, made noises, offered his eyeglass to the infant, but withdrew it when the child attempted to suck it. From the baby, Yeo glided into remarks addressed to the nurse, asked her how long she had been on the road, whether she was French or Swiss, what was the name of her home, how she liked England, etc., regardless of the frowns of Philip, who at length, to draw off his father-in-law from this unsuitable conversation, said sternly:

'Pray how long have you been at Andermatt?'

'Oh! several weeks. I was there before my Sal arrived. I have no doubt Janet wrote and told her I was there, and filial duty—filial duty—one of the most beautiful and blessed of the qualities locked in the human breast—in the human breast—drew her to Andermatt to make a fuller, freer acquaintance with the author of her being than was possible in England—in England.'

When the carriage had passed the Devil's Bridge and the little chapel at the mouth of the ravine, where the broad basin of fertile pasture opens out, in which stands the village of Andermatt, a party of ladies and one gentleman was visible on the road, two in deep mourning, two in colours, and three girls in half-mourning.

'Ha!' exclaimed the colonel, 'my family.'

Philip looked intently at the party. He at once recognised Salome, and was satisfied that the other in black was Janet. To his great surprise he saw Mrs. Sidebottom and the captain. Who that slender lady was in a light dress he could only conjecture. If he had not been in the carriage with Beaple Yeo, he would have told the driver to stop, and allow him to descend and greet his wife; but the presence at his side of that man determined him to postpone the meeting. He did not wish Salome to see him riding beside her father, as though he had made up his quarrel with him.

He drew back in his place, and looked another way whilst driving past, and Salome, who had caught sight of the well-known waving puggaree, lowered her eyes. Beaple Yeo had his hat off, and was wafting a salutation to the American lady.

Then, when passed, he turned to Philip and said, 'You will do me the favour,

I know, not to announce your relationship; 'pon my word, I don't want to be looked upon as a grandfather, because I don't feel it. Young blood tingles in my veins.'

The strange lady had stepped aside for the carriage to pass, upon the bank near that side on which Philip sat, and he looked at her as he drove by, looked at her with a feeling of aversion. It was too annoying of Salome to walk out with this questionable individual and meet him as he arrived, thrusting her almost into his face.

On reaching the Hôtel Impérial he had to undergo the annoyance of being taken in hand, patronized and presented by Beaple Yeo. Philip was a bad French scholar, spoke no German, and the English of the proprietor was not understandable till one got used to it.

Philip asked for his room, and said to himself, 'There will be time for me to wash my hands and change my shirt; the collars are limp—not enough stiffening put in them, they will not stand up. *Ici! voyez!*' to the maid. 'Is there a *boulanger*—no, I mean a *blanchisseuse* in this place? Wait till my portmanteau is open. I want to have five pocket-handkerchiefs sent at once to the wash. *Ici! voyez!* soft water, *et point de soda et* washing-powder.'

When he had delivered over the pocket-handkerchiefs and had assumed a clean shirt, and brushed his hair, and washed his face and hands, he descended to the *salle*, and asked if the ladies had returned from their walk.

'Note yet, saire,' answered the porter.

'How long before they do come back?'

'I sure I can note tell. Bote too shupper sure.'

'Very well,' said Philip, 'go and send for the nurse and the child. They must be ready. It will be,' said he to himself, 'a pleasure to me after the first rapture is over, to show Salome that I have brought her the child.'

When the nurse came in Philip ordered her to sit with the baby in the veranda before the hotel; the air was fresh, but dry and delicious, and the child could take no harm. Then he ordered for himself some claret and iced soda-water.

It was inconsiderate of Salome keeping him waiting. He was anxious to see her, notwithstanding the provocation given him. Why should she not have been there instead of going out for a walk? No doubt she and her party had strolled to the Devil's Bridge.

'Waiter,' called Philip. 'Which is the table at which the ladies sit?'

When told, he said, 'I suppose there are seven covers?'

'Eight, saire; de American leddy sits dere.'

'Eight; very well, waiter. I sit with them in future, and the American lady goes to another table. Do you understand? There is no place for her at the table where I sit.'

Presently Philip heard the clear, pleasant voices of the girls and the ladies outside, and their feet on the gravel. He started up and hastened down the hall; but before he could reach the door he heard Salome's voice, partly raised in cry as of pain, partly in extremity of joy.

'It is! It is! It can be no other! It is my baby!'

How did she know it? To the male eye there is scarcely any distinction between babies; as one lamb is like another lamb, and one buttercup like another buttercup, so are all babies alike. Some have dark hair, others are blondes; but so among lambs. And there are varieties of species in buttercups; in the Alpine pastures some are silver. Unwarned, unprepared, Salome knew her baby; knew it at once, with a leap of her heart and a rush of blood that roared in her ears and for a moment dazzled her eyes. She asked no questions how it came there, she entertained no doubt whether it was her own, her very own—in a moment she had the little creature in her arms, laughing, crying, covering its face and hands with kisses; and the child also knew its mother, had no wonder how she came to be there, no doubt whether it were really she; it thrust forth its little pats, and held Salome by the copper-gold hair, and put its rosy mouth to her cheek.

'Salome!' exclaimed Janet, 'how can you be so ridiculous? This must be some other child; who could have brought yours here?'

Then Philip appeared in the doorway—but Salome's eyes were blind with tears of joy, and she did not see him; she could see nothing but her child. He spoke—she did not hear him; she could hear nothing but the cooing of her babe.

Philip stood beside her and touched her on the shoulder.

'Do you not know me?' he asked. 'Are you not glad to see me?'

Salome stood still and released her child. She was confused; she hardly knew whether she were awake or in the most beautiful, blissful of dreams.

'Well—this is hardly the—the—Salome. Do you not know me?'

'Oh, Philip!' she gasped, 'is it really you? And you have brought me my baby! Oh! how good, how kind!' and she fell to kissing and hugging her baby again.

Then Philip, finding himself put completely in the background, condemned to a subsidiary part to that played by Philip the Little, was offended, and said with a slight tone of acerbity: 'My dear Salome, be decorous. Give up Phil now to the nurse, a Swiss young person, and come, take my arm.'

'Philip,' said Salome, 'Oh, Philip, how good! how very dear of you!'

He felt her heart beating wildly against his arm, as she clung to him, at his side. Then she began to sob. 'It is too great happiness. My darling! My darling pet! and looking so well too.'

'You mean the baby?'

'Yes, of course, Philip.'

She put her hand in her pocket, drew out her ’kerchief and wiped her eyes.

’By the way,’ said Philip, ’how many had I?’

’How many what, Philip? Only this one, darling,’

’I mean pocket-handkerchiefs. All, all have disappeared, and I have been condemned to one. I have come here to Andermatt expressly to know what my stock consisted of. Conceive, only one pocket-handkerchief left!’

CHAPTER XLII.
THE GAUNTLET DANGLED.

Philip had to shake hands with Janet, with his aunt, with the three Labartes, to whom he was introduced, and with a little heartiness to clasp the hand of the captain. He was introduced, moreover, to the American lady, and was thus given the well-considered opportunity of saluting her with calculated indifference. He somewhat exaggerated the cordiality of his greeting of the Labarte girls so as to emphasize the chilliness of his behaviour towards the young lady from Chicago.

When the first excitement of meeting was past, Philip was overwhelmed with questions. ’How was dear Uncle Jeremiah?—was he much altered?’ ’What was going to be done about the mill?’ and ’What a puzzle it would be about the administration?’ ’Could he re-establish himself legally as alive after he had been decreed dead?’ ’What had happened at Mergatroyd besides the return of Uncle Jeremiah?’ ’How had the people received him?’ ’Had they erected a triumphal arch?’ ’Did he write beforehand to say he was coming?’ ’What sort of weather had they had in England?’ ’What kind of crossing had Philip?’ ’Had baby suffered at all from the sea?’ ’What did he think of the railway?’

There was no end to the questions asked, which Philip answered as well as he could. And as he received and replied to the questions he kept his eye on the strange lady, and considered how she must feel—shut out from all the interests which engrossed those connected with him; and how much in the way she ought to regard herself.

This she did observe, and drew aside, out of hearing, and as Beaple Yeo came forward, fell into conversation with him. His presence had an immediate numbing effect on Philip and Salome and Janet. They withdrew to another end of the *salon.*

Philip had used his opportunity to observe the strange lady, and he admit-

ted to himself that she was good-looking.

Of course there are differences in types of beauty, and she was not of the type that commended itself to Philip—so he thought. She had dark hair and a transparent olive complexion. Possibly a touch of dark blood in her, mused Philip, and he said to himself:

'I will take the first opportunity to look at her nails.'

Her features were finely modelled, with a firmness of cutting that showed she was no longer in her teens, undeveloped. The flexible transparent nostrils, the slightly-curled curves of the lips, the wavy hair over the brow—whether natural, the result of a trace of black blood, or artificially produced—the splendid dark eyes that looked at Philip, looked down into him and flashed through his whole being like a lamp shining into a cellar—the delicate ears, the beautiful neck, not too long, set on well-formed shoulders—all were observed by Philip.

'Yes,' said Philip, 'she is handsome, but she belongs to that period of life which may be twenty-four or thirty-four. She has got out of thirteenhood, that is clear.'

He looked at Salome. If Salome was his ideal, nothing could be more different than her type from the type of Miss Durham. There was a childlike simplicity in Salome, an ignorance of the world which would make of her a child to gray hairs; and this strange lady had clearly none of this simplicity and ignorance; she knew a great deal about the ways and varieties of life. One like Miss Durham would never go into gushing ecstasy over a baby, and forget that the first homage was due to her husband.

It afforded emphatic pleasure to Philip to be able to demonstrate before this single lady, with such a circle of relatives about him—six ladies and one gentleman—we are eight and you are one. It was Joseph's sheaf with all the sheaves bowing down before it; it was like a man with a pedigree describing the family tree to a self-made man. It was like a hen with a brood of chickens clucking and strutting before a fowl that has never reared a solitary chick, hardly laid an egg; it was like a millionaire showing his pictures, his plate, his equipages, his yacht, to an acquaintance who had two hundred a year.

It has just been stated that the American girl's eyes had flashed down into Philip's, and irradiated his interior as a lantern does a cellar—a wine-cellar, of course—and the light revealed magnificent cobwebs, thick dust, and some spiders. There was, unquestionably, in Philip much rare good wine, excellent qualities of heart and soul, but they were none of them on tap, all were bottled, and all overlaid with whitewash, and dust, and matted with the fibres and folds of prejudice. These masses of cobweb, these layers of dust, these fat spiders were objects of pride to Philip. Every year the cobwebs gathered density, and the dust accumulated, and the spiders became more gross, hideous, and venomous; the

wine remained corked, it was merely an excuse for the cultivation of cobwebs and spiders. We are all eager to show our friends through these rich wine-vaults of our hearts. We light candles and conduct them down with infinite pride, and what we expose is only our curtains of prejudice of ancient standing and long formation, our meannesses, and our spites. If we offer them to taste of our best wine, it is but through straws.

On the other hand, there was Colonel Yeo, a walking Bodega of generous sentiment, with every rich passion and ripe opinion always on tap—ask what you would, and you had a tumblerful. But we libel Bodega, the gush with which he regaled his acquaintance was not true vintage; it was squeezed raisins and logwood, gooseberry and elder—no cobwebs of prejudice there, not a trace even of a scruple, not a token of maturity.

Supper was hurried on, because Philip was hungry, half an hour before the usual time at which the little party sat down to their special table in the alcove.

'Oh!' said Salome, 'there is a cover short. Waiter, we shall be nine to-night and in future, not eight. My husband is here.'

'Pardon,' answered the waiter, 'monsieur expressly said eight.'

'Oh, he forgot. He did not understand. We are now nine.'

Then Philip interfered.

'I said eight, but if you particularly desire Miss Durham's society, I can sit at the long table with the common guests.'

'Oh, Philip! surely, surely not!' exclaimed Salome. 'It will hurt her feelings.'

'She will understand that we are a family party, and that from such a party strangers are best excluded.'

Salome heaved a sigh. She could not endure the thought of giving pain to anyone.

'Who is she?' asked Philip.

'She is a lady, and very agreeable. Indeed, a most superior person. You will be certain to like her, when you come to know her. Oh, Philip! she knows a thousand things about which I am ignorant.'

'I have no doubt about that,' answered Philip ironically; 'and things I would be sorry you should know about. I make no question she has seen the shady side of life.'

'But she is tremendously rich.'

'Who says so?'

'The waiter—of course, he knows. And Colonel Yeo pays her great attention accordingly. Oh, Philip! I wish so much you would extend your protection to her against him. He may draw her into one of his schemes for the advancement of missionaries or the propagation of dogs—and get a lot of money out of her. Do—do, Philip, protect her against him. I—I—I don't like to speak about him. You can

understand that, Philip.'

'Very well,' said he; 'I will do what I can.' He was flattered at the idea of acting as protector to this young American lady. 'But I put down my foot and say she is not to sit at our table.'

The party gathered in the alcove, and fortunately Miss Durham was the last to arrive, so there was no difficulty about requesting her to take a place elsewhere. When she entered the *salle-à-manger* at the usual hour, every seat was occupied at the table to which for some little while she had been admitted. She saw at a glance that her place was taken, and she went without demur, or a look of disappointment, to the long table. She had sufficient tact to perceive that Philip disliked her, and she had no intention of pressing her society on those who did not desire it. So far from seeming vexed, a slight contemptuous smile, like the flicker of summer lightning, played about her lips. She caught Salome's eye, full of appeal and apology, and returned it with a good-natured nod. 'A trifle such as this,' said the nod, 'will not give me offence.'

Mrs. Sidebottom sat beside Philip, and plied him with questions relative to the intentions of Uncle Jeremiah—questions which he was unable to answer; but she attributed his evasive replies to unwillingness to speak, and pressed him the more urgently. The captain was attentive to Janet, who had recovered her spirits, laughed and twinkled, and without intentionally coquetting, did coquet with him. Janet became dull in female society, but that of men acted as a tonic upon her; it was like Parrish's Chemical Food to a bloodless girl; it brisked her up, gave colour to her cheek, and set her tongue wagging. The captain was good-natured, and he threw a word or two to the Labarte girls, but devoted his chief attention to Janet.

Salome was left to herself, Mrs. Sidebottom engrossed her nephew, whether he would or not, and when he said something to Salome, he was interrupted by Mrs. Sidebottom, who exclaimed:

'Now, fiddle-de-dee, you will have plenty of time to talk in private to your wife, whereas I shall see you only occasionally, and I am particularly interested in all you can tell me of Jeremiah. Give me your candid opinion; what will he do? Is he angry with me?'

'I can give no opinion without grounds on which to base it, and Uncle Jeremiah has not taken me into his confidence.'

'I see you have the reserve of a lawyer. I had enough of that when Sidebottom was alive. I hate reserve. Give me frankness. Now—if you will not tell me what you know of my brother's intentions——'

'I know nothing, and can therefore divulge nothing.'

'You won't tell, that is the truth. Don't tell me you have been a fortnight and more under the same roof with him and have not found out his intentions!

Well—to change the subject—what do you think of the scheme for buying up the hospice on the St. Gothard and turning it into an establishment for Mount St. Bernard dogs?'

CHAPTER XLIII.
THE GAUNTLET CAST.

When supper was ended, the whole party adjourned to the promenade outside the hotel, where a fountain plashed in a basin, and in an aviary on a perch stood a scowling, draggled eagle, and beside the aviary were cages with marmots, smelling abominably, and fettered on a patch of grass was a miserable chamois that seemed to have the mange.

It was delightful to walk in the crisp pure air of evening without cap or bonnet, and watch the evening glow on the snow-fields, and listen to the tinkle of the bells as the cows were driven home from the Alpine pastures and diverged to their several stables from the main street. Beaple Yeo came out after the party of Philip's table, not hatless, and his puggaree in the dusk fluttered like a gigantic white moth. The chaplain for the summer from England was also walking in the grounds with his newly-married wife: a feeble youth with a high-pitched voice and a cackling laugh, who had cultivated a military moustache, to point out his imbecility, as the ass in the fable assumed a lion's skin, but was revealed as an ass on opening his mouth. A party of Germans was feeding and talking vociferously. A couple of Alpine Clubmen in knickerbockers, carrying their alpenstocks proudly, trudged in with a guide, the latter laden with their knapsacks.

Salome had been walking, nestled against Philip's side, not saying much, but feeling happy, when her attention was attracted by the wailing of a babe from one of the hotel windows.

'Philip, dear!' she said, 'there is my pet, my darling crying. I must tear myself away from you and go to him. I know he wants me. He is so clever. He is quite aware that I am here, and resents being rocked to sleep by the Swiss nurse; he is protesting that nothing will make him close his peepers but mamma's voice, and a kiss. And—oh, dear, dear Philip! I don't like to think it possible you can be unkind to anyone—there is Miss Durham behind us, all by herself; do—do say a word to her and be civil. It was rather—well, not quite rude, but strange of us paying no attention to her at supper, and turning her out of her

place. Philip, I could not eat my supper, I was so uncomfortable. I would not hurt anyone's feelings willingly, and I am sure Miss Durham has not been treated with consideration; would you—because I ask you—for my sake, speak to her when I am gone to baby?'

She looked up entreatingly in his eyes, loosed her hand from his arm, and was gone.

Philip slackened his pace, then halted, to allow the American lady to catch him up. He would speak to her, and give her to understand, of course politely, that intimacy with his wife must cease. When she came level with him he raised his hat, and said, 'A beautiful evening; a charming evening.'

'So I have already perceived, Mr. Pennycomequick.'

'What a surprise this green basin of valley is to one emerging from the ravine of the Reuss!' said Philip.

'Yes,' with indifference; then, with animation, 'By the way, you were in the carriage with Colonel Yeo.'

'I beg pardon, he was in the carriage with me.'

'I suppose you are old friends?' said the lady.

Philip stiffened his back. 'Miss Durham, we belong to distinct classes of society. With his I have nothing in common.'

'But you knew each other?'

'I knew of him. I cannot say I knew him.'

'Have you no ambition to rise to his social grade?'

'To—rise—to—his—social grade!' It took Philip some time to digest this question. He replied ironically, 'None in the least, I do assure you. I am thankful to say I belong to that middle class which works for its living honourably, diligently, and finds its pleasure and its pride in industry.'

'And Colonel Yeo?'

'Oh! I assure you he does not soil his fingers with honest trade or business.'

'You do not want to know him?'

'I have not the smallest ambition.'

After a pause, during which neither spoke, Philip resumed. 'There are subjects that are distasteful to me; this is one.'

'I see,' said Miss Durham, 'you are a Radical.'

'We will let the subject drop,' said Philip. 'This air is delightful to me after the smoke of a Yorkshire manufacturing district.'

'It is really surprising how fresh, notwithstanding, your wife is,' answered the Chicago lady.

Philip turned sharply round and looked at her. 'Fresh!' he repeated. He did not understand what her meaning was—fresh in complexion, or that her character was green and raw.

'Her freshness is quite delightful,' added the lady.

Then Philip's anger broke loose. He was offended at any remark being made on Salome by a person of whom he knew nothing.

'Indeed—perhaps so. And it is precisely this freshness, this generosity of mind, this ignorance of the world, which leads her to extend the hand of fellowship to—to anyone—to those who may not be as fresh as herself—who may be quite the reverse.'

Miss Durham stood still, her face gleamed with anger.

'I know, sir, very well what you mean. You know that I am alone, without a man—a father, brother or husband by to protect me from insult, and you take this advantage to address me thus.'

She revolved on her heel and walked hastily back to the hotel. Philip stood rooted to the spot.

What had he done? What shadow of a right had he to address an inoffensive girl with such impertinence? A girl who had done him no harm, and of whom he knew nothing, and who, for aught he knew to the contrary, might be as respectable, high-minded, and well-connected as the best lady in America. She had been alone in this foreign corner, shut out from social intercourse with her fellow-countrymen, and she had formed an acquaintance with his wife, his wife's sister, and the Labarte girls. What right had he to step in and thrust her out of association with them?

He had done what he determined, but done it in so clumsy a manner as to put himself in the wrong, make himself who stood on punctilio appear an unlicked bear. He had behaved to an unprotected, young, and beautiful girl in a manner that would have disgraced the rudest artisan, in a manner that he knew not one of his honest Yorkshire workmen in his factory would have dared to behave.

CHAPTER XLIV.

AND PICKED UP.

Matters that look serious at night shrink to trifling significance in the morning. Philip rose refreshed by sleep, with a buoyancy of heart he had not experienced for many months, and a resolution to enjoy his holiday now that he was taking one. How often had he longed for the chance of making an excursion on the

Continent, of seeing the snowy ranges of the Alps and studying fresh aspects of human life! Now the opportunity had come, and he must make the most of it. His prospects at home were not such as to discourage him; he was no longer the ruling manager of the Pennycomequick firm, but he was not going to be kicked out of the concern as he had at first feared. Uncle Jeremiah purposed to take him into partnership, make him working partner, and in all probability he would be better off than with Mrs. Sidebottom, consuming more than half the profits and contributing nothing.

He had been tired with his journey yesterday, irritated at finding Beaple Yeo in his proximity, and he had given way to his irritation and spoken uncourteously to an American lady. What of that? Who was she to take offence at what he said? If she were angered she must swallow her wrath. She had vexed him by pushing herself into the acquaintance of his wife. If people will climb over hedges they must expect scratches. If requisite he could apologize, and the thing was over. Miss Durham had made a remark which he considered a slight passed on his wife, and he was right to resent it. If she had made a thrust with an unguarded foil, it was not likely that he would retaliate with the end of his, blunted by a button.

He came downstairs, feeling cheerful and on the best of terms with the world. He would go for a walk that day with Salome—to the Ober-Alp, and pick gentians and Alpen-rose; and in preparation for the walk, he went to the collection of carved work, photographs, and Alpine paraphernalia exhibited in the *salle-à-manger* by the head waiter for sale, and bought himself a stout walking-stick with an artificial chamois-horn as handle. Then he strolled out into the village-street, and looked in at the shop-windows. There was only one shop that interested him; it contained crystals smoked and clear, and specimens of the rocks on the St. Gothard Pass, collections of dried flowers and photographs.

When he returned to the inn he found that his party was in the *salle* awaiting him. The usual massive white coffee-cups, heap of rolls, all crust outside and bubbles within, wafers of butter, and artificial honey were on table.

A German lady was prowling about the room with her head so tumbled that it was hard to believe she had dressed her hair since leaving her bed, and the curate was there also, ambling round his bride and squeaking forth entreaties that she would allow him to order her eggs for breakfast. Philip was heartily glad that he sat along with his party at one table, in the alcove. Miss Durham was not there.

On inquiry Salome learned that she had ordered breakfast to be taken to her room.

’So much the better,’ said Philip.

’My dear, surely you made friends yesterday evening after I left you.’

’Come—to table,’ said Philip; and then—’on the contrary, I don’t know quite

how it came about, but something I said gave her umbrage, and she flew away in a rage. I suppose I offended her. It does not matter. Pass me the butter.'

'It does not matter! Oh, Philip!'

'Given Miss Durham offence!' exclaimed Mrs. Sidebottom. 'But—she is worth thousands. How could you be so indiscreet?'

'She is so charming,' said Janet.

'So amiable,' murmured Claudine Labarte.

'*Mais, quelle gaucherie!*' whispered the penultimate Labarte to the youngest sister.

Then ensued a silence. Philip looked from one to another. Already a cloud had come into his clear sky.

Philip said sternly, 'Pass me the butter.'

Those who seemed least concerned were the captain and Janet, who sat together and were engrossed in little jokes that passed between them, and were not heard or regarded by the rest of the company.

'This is very unfortunate,' said Mrs. Sidebottom, 'for we had made a plan to go to the hospice together, and she would have paid her share of the carriage.'

Salome looked into her plate; her colour came and went. She slid her hand into that of her husband, and whispered, 'I did not mean to reproach you. I am sure you were right.'

'I was right,' answered Philip; 'something she said appeared to me a reflection on you and I fired up. I am your husband, and am bound to do so.'

'I am quite sure, then, you misunderstood her,' said Salome; 'dear Miss Durham could not—no, I do not mean that—would not say a word against me. Of course I know I have plenty of faults, and she cannot have failed to observe them; but she would not dream of alluding to them, least of all to you.'

'That is possible,' answered Philip. 'And I will say or do something to pass it off. But, I hope you see that I did the correct thing in taking your part, even if no slight was intended.'

'Of course, Philip.'

Then Salome stood up and said, 'I will go to her. I will tell her there was a misunderstanding. It will come best from me, as I was the occasion.'

Philip nodded. It was certainly best that Salome should do this, and save him the annoyance and—well, yes, the humiliation of an apology.

When Salome was gone, Philip spoke to the eldest Labarte girl, but found her uninteresting; and the younger sisters looked at him with ill-concealed dissatisfaction. He had come to Andermatt and spoiled their party. They had been cheerful and united before. Miss Durham had been infinitely amusing, and now Philip had introduced discord, was wooden and weariful. They wished he had remained at home in smoky, foggy England; if he came—he should have left the

fog and chill behind him, instead of diffusing it over a contented and merry party. Mrs. Sidebottom had left the table to haggle with the head waiter over a paper-cutter with a chamois leg as handle, that she wanted to buy and send as a present to Jeremiah, but was indisposed to pay for it the price asked by the waiter.

'But, madam,' said the waiter, 'if you do not take him at de price, Mademoiselle Durham vill; she have admired and wanted to buy him, and she goes away to-day.'

'Miss Durham going!' exclaimed Mrs. Sidebottom, and rushed back to the table to announce the news. 'Why—who will go halves with us in vehicles! This is your doing, Philip. You have offended her, and are driving her away.'

The announcement produced silence; and all eyes were turned on Philip, those of the Labarte girls with undisguised indignation. Even the captain and Janet ceased their conversation. An angel may have passed through the room, but he must have been a crippled one, so long did he take in traversing it; nor can he have been a good one, so little light and cheerfulness did he diffuse.

'Well!' said Philip, 'what if she be going? That is no concern of ours.'

Then he stood up and left the room. He was in an unamiable mood. This party did not show him the consideration that was due to him; and found fault with him about trifles. He left the hotel, and wandered to the aviary, where he remained contemplating the scowling eagle. The bird perhaps recognised a similarity of mood in his visitor, for he turned his head, ruffled his feathers, and looked at Philip.

'Well,' said Philip, 'that is the king of the birds, is it? To my mind a bumptious, ill-conditioned, dissatisfied, and uninteresting fowl.'

Then he moved in front of the marmot cage. 'And these are marmots, that spend more than half their life in sleep. Very like Lambert Sidebottom or Pennycomequick, as he is pleased to call himself now.'

He looked at the eagle again. 'Pshaw! Pluck him of his self-consciousness as Aquila—and what is he? What is he?'

Then he wandered away among the flower-beds and bushes of syringa without a purpose, grumbling to himself at the manners of those Labartes, and the figures that Lambert and Janet made, laughing over inane jokes, and regretting that he had allowed Salome to go in search of the Chicago lady.

Salome in the meantime had hastened to her friend's room, the number of which she knew, and found her packing her portmanteau and dress-boxes. The room was strewn with dresses.

'But,' exclaimed Salome on entering, 'what is the meaning of this? Miss Durham! You are surely not going to leave?'

'Certainly I am,' answered the American lady. 'I have been insulted here, and shall leave the place for one where there are better manners.'

'Oh, don't go. My husband did not mean to offend you. I do not know what he said, but I am quite sure he would do nothing ungentlemanly, unkind. He has had a long journey, and this and other matters had just put him in a condition of nervous excitement. If you wish it he will explain, but surely you will take my word that no impertinence was intended.'

Miss Durham looked at Salome steadily.

'The word has been said.'

'But,' pleaded Salome, 'my husband will unsay it. I entreat you forget and forgive.'

'I cannot. It is not in my nature.'

'Not forgive? Oh, Miss Durham, half the sweetness and happiness of life is made up of forgiveness.'

'Tastes differ,' said the American, and stooped to her work again.

Salome went to her and arrested her hands. 'I will not, I cannot allow you to go. I should ever feel an ache in my heart to think that you had gone away without reconciliation.' Half laughing, half crying, she added: 'I thought that if it could possibly be that you and my husband should meet, you would become close friends—but I never supposed he would come out here to me—I mean I did not think he could leave his business. And now that he is here, instead of making friends with you, a quarrel is picked and you are almost enemies.'

'Quite,' said Miss Durham coolly.

'Not so with him. If he knew how to obtain your forgiveness he would do that thing. Is there no way in which you can be satisfied?'

'Oh yes, by obtaining satisfaction.'

Salome looked at her. The handsome face was much altered, there was a bitterness and scorn in it she had never seen before. The dark eyebrows were drawn together, forming a sombre, threatening bar across her face above her splendid eyes.

'When a man has offended another, he that is injured calls out the offender, and there is an exchange of pistol-shots. Had I here anyone who belonged to me, anyone to stand by me and defend my character, I would send him with a challenge to your husband, and they would fight the matter out on the green sward by the chapel, or better,' she laughed, 'on the Devil's Bridge. But as I have neither father, nor brother, nor husband, I must fight for my own honour, or——'

'Or what, Miss Durham?'

'Or run away.'

Both were silent; presently Salome laughed a little nervously, and said:

'But you never fight? no woman fights.'

'Does she not?'

'Not with pistols.

'Perhaps not.'

'Nor with swords.'

'Oh no.'

'Then—with what?'

'With her proper weapons.'

'You may be quite sure my husband would throw down his arms and yield at discretion.'

'I have little doubt.'

Salome closed the box on which Miss Durham had been engaged, and seated herself upon it. Then she looked up with childlike entreaty into her friend's face, and said:

'I will not allow you to go. We had schemed to have such pleasant excursions together. We have been so happy since we have known each other, and——I have not yet had the delight of showing you my baby—my best treasure.'

'You will not let me run away?'

'No, no! You will forget this little affair; it was nothing. Come and be with us again. My husband is a great reader, and knows a great deal about things of which I am ignorant, and you have travelled and seen so much that your society will interest him immensely. Oh, do stay, do not go away.'

The American girl went to the window, leaned both her arms folded on it, and looked out. She could see into the garden, and she observed Philip there, standing before the eagle's cage. He had a little twig in his hand, and he was thrusting it between the bars at the bird. She turned and said to Salome:

'No—I will go. There are several reasons which urge me to go. The insult which I received from your husband for one—and already he had allowed me to see that he disliked and despised me——'

'No, indeed,' interrupted Salome. 'I had written to him in all my letters about you, and—perhaps he was a little jealous of you.'

'Jealous of *me*?'

'It is a fancy of mine.'

Salome lowered her eyes.

'Oh, you fresh, you green dear!' laughed Miss Durham. 'Do you know what jealousy is?'

'By experience? No.'

'Come,' said the American girl, seating herself beside her on the same box, still with folded arms, resting now on her lap. 'Come! Supposing that I, instead of being hated and despised by your husband, were admired and loved by him. Would you not be madly jealous then?'

Salome looked round at her without flinching.

'Admire you he might, but love you——'

'More than he loved *you*!'

'He could not do it.'

The girl burst into a mocking laugh.

'What, you also hold me cheap, think there is nothing in me beside you—beside you—to love?'

'On the contrary,' answered Salome, crimsoning to the roots of her hair, 'I am nothing, nothing at all; ignorant, foolish, fresh, and green, as you say—and you are so beautiful, so clever, so experienced. I am nothing whatever in comparison with you, but then Philip, I mean my husband, you know *could* not love you more than me, because I am his wife.'

'Oh!' There was a depth of mockery in the tone.

Then up stood Miss Durham again, and as Salome also rose, the stranger seized her by the shoulders, and held her at arm's length from her, and said:

'Shall I go, or shall I stay? Shall I run away, or——'

'You shall not run away. I will clasp you in my arms and stay you,' exclaimed Salome, and suited the action to the word.

Miss Durham loosed herself from her almost roughly.

'It were better for both that I should go.'

Again she went to the window to gasp for air. She saw Philip still before the eagle's cage—straight, stiff, and every inch a mercantile man. Her lip curled.

'I will go,' she said. Then she saw Beaple Yeo stalk across the terrace. 'No'—she corrected herself hastily—'I will stay.'

CHAPTER XLV.
OBER-ALP.

After Philip had looked sufficiently long at the caged eagle, he went in search of the captain, and found him smoking in the veranda of the hotel.

'Lambert,' said he, 'there's a deal of fuss being made about this American lady, but who is she?'

'Comes from Chicago,' answered the captain.

'I know that, but I want to know something more concerning her.'

The captain shrugged his shoulders. 'She's good-looking, deucedly so.'

'That, also, I can see for myself. Have you made no inquiries about her?'

'I? why should I?'

Philip called the head waiter to him.

'Here. Who is this American lady?'

'Oh, from Chicago.'

'Exactly; the visitors'-book says as much. I don't see how she can be rich; she has no lady's-maid.'

'Oh, saire! De American leddies aire ver' ind'pendent.'

There was nothing to be learnt from anyone about Miss Durham. He applied to the squeaky-voiced chaplain with the military moustache.

'She may belong to the Episcopal Church of America,' said the chaplain; 'but I don't know.'

Some of the waiters had seen her elsewhere, at other summer resorts, always well dressed. Philip, after he had spent half an hour in inquiries, discovered that no one knew more about her than himself. He had heard nothing to her disadvantage, but also nothing to her advantage. He might just as well have spared himself the trouble of asking.

At *table d'hôte*, Miss Durham sat at the long table. Salome was disappointed. She thought that she had succeeded in completely patching up the difference. Philip was indifferent. Just as well that she should be elsewhere. She was an occasion of dissension, a comet that threw all the planetary world in his system out of their perihelion. He made no bones about saying as much. Salome looked sadly at him, when Colonel Yeo took his seat beside Miss Durham, and entered into ready converse with her. She could not take her attention off her friend; she was uneasy for her, afraid what advantage the crafty colonel might take of her inexperience. But it was not long before Philip heartily wished that Miss Durham had been in her place in their circle, for conversation flagged without her, or ceased to be general and disintegrated into whisperings between the girls Labarte, and confidences between Janet and Lambert. Salome was silent, and Mrs. Sidebottom engrossed in what she was eating. Philip spoke about politics, and found no listeners; he asked about the excursions to be made from Andermatt, and was referred to the guide-book; he tried a joke, but it fell dead. Finally he became silent as his wife and aunt, with a glum expression on his inflexible face, and found himself, as well as Salome, looking down the long table at Miss Durham. The young lady was evidently enjoying an animated and entertaining conversation with Colonel Yeo, whose face became blotched as he went into fits of laughter. She was telling some droll anecdote, making some satirical remark. Philip caught the eye of Yeo turned on him, and then the colonel put his napkin to his mouth and exploded. Philip's back became stiff. It offended him to the marrow of his spine, through every articulation of that spinal column, to suppose himself a topic for jest, a butt of satire. He reddened to his temples, and finding that he had seated himself on the skirts of his coat, stood up, divided them, and

sat down again, pulled up his collars, and asked how many more courses they were required to eat.

'Oh! we have come to the chicken and salad, and that is always the last,' said Salome.

'I am glad to hear it. I never less enjoyed a meal before—not even——' He remembered the dinner alone at Mergatroyd, with the parlourmaid behind his back observing his mole. He did not finish his sentence; he did not consider it judicious to let his wife know how much he had missed her.

It was not pleasant to be at enmity with a person who by gibe and joke could make him seem ridiculous, even in such eyes as those of Beaple Yeo. It would be advisable to come to an agreement, a truce, if not a permanent peace, with this woman.

Presently Philip rose and walked down the *salle.* Several of those who had dined were gone, some remained shelling almonds, picking out the least uninteresting of the sugar-topped biscuits and make-believe macaroons, that constituted dessert. He stepped up to Miss Durham, and said, with an effort to be amiable and courteous: 'We are meditating a ramble this afternoon, Miss Durham, to some lake not very distant; and I am exponent of the unanimous sentiment of our table, when I say that the excursion will lose its main charm unless you will afford us the pleasure of your society.'

He had been followed by the Labarte girls, and they now put in their voices, and then Mrs. Sidebottom joined; she came to back up the request. It was not possible for the American girl to refuse. The captain and Janet had not united in the request, but they had attention for none but each other, and Salome had not risen and united in the fugue, for a reason unaccountable to herself—a sudden doubt whether she had acted wisely in pressing the lady to stay after she had resolved to go; and yet—she could give to herself no grounds for this doubt.

A couple of hours later the party left the hotel. It was thought advisable that Janet should be taken to the summit of the pass in a small low carriage; she could walk home easily, down-hill. Into the carriage was harnessed an ungroomed chestnut cob, that had a white or straw-coloured tail, and like coloured patches of hair about the hocks. It had the general appearance of having been frost-bitten in early youth, or fed on stimulants which had interfered with its growth, and deprived it of all after-energy. The creature crawled up the long zigzag that leads from Andermatt to the Ober-Alp, and the driver walked by its head, ill-disposed to encourage it to exertion. The captain paced by the side of the carriage, equally undesirous that the step should be quickened, for he had no wish to overheat himself—time was made for man, not man for time—and he had an agreeable companion with whom he conversed.

Mrs. Sidebottom engaged the Labarte girls, who—inconsiderate creatures—

wanted to walk beside their aunt Janet, and take part in the conversation with the captain. Mrs. Sidebottom particularly wished that her son should be left undisturbed. As an Oriental potentate is attended by a slave waving a fan of feathers to drive away from his august presence the tormenting flies, so did the mother act on this occasion for her son—she fanned away the obtrusive Labarte girls. When she found that they were within earshot of the carriage, 'Now,' said she, 'I am sure this is a short cut across the sward. You are young, and I am no longer quite a girl. Let us see whether you, by taking the steep cross-cut, or I, by walking at a good pace along the road, will reach that crucifix first.' By this ruse she got the three girls well ahead of the conveyance; but Claudine found a patch of blue gentianella, and wanted to dig the bunch up. 'No, no,' advised Mrs. Sidebottom, 'not in going out—on your return homewards; then you will not have the roots to carry so far, and the flowers will be less faded.' There was reason in this advice, and Claudine followed it.

Presently Amélie, the second, exclaimed, 'But we are just in advance of Aunt Janet. Let us stay for her.'

'Yes, we will,' agreed Félicité, the third; 'Claudine can go on with madame.'

'We will all stay,' said Mrs. Sidebottom. 'Now Amélie, I have seen your sketches, and you have your book with you. Is not that a superb view up the gorge, to the right? I do not know the name of the mountain at the head. What a picture it would make! And finished off with the spirit you throw into a drawing! See, there is a *châlet*, and some goats for foreground!'

'*C'est vrai*! I will draw it.' So Amélie sat on a rock, and got out her materials; and the sisters sat by her, talking and advising what was to be left in and what left out of the sketch. Meanwhile the conveyance containing Janet crawled by. The picture was still incomplete, and the little party was thrown a long way in the rear by this detention.

To anyone observing the zigzag road up the Ober-Alp Pass from a distance, the party would not have been supposed to possess homogeneity. At starting it was led by three—Philip, Salome, and the American lady; but after the first stage of the ascent Salome fell back, then, little by little, the other two quickened their pace till they had completely distanced the rest. At a lower stage of the inclined road, ascending at an even pace, was Salome, alone. At about an equal distance below, on another stage of the zigzag, was the carriage with Janet and the captain, and the driver, of whom no account was taken; and sometimes ahead of the carriage, sometimes behind, making rushes, then halts, like a covey of doves followed by a hawk, was the little cluster of girls with Mrs. Sidebottom. From a distance at one moment the three girls seemed to be flying before the elder lady armed with a parasol, which she swung about her head, then they seemed to cower on the ground into the herbage as birds beneath a swooping falcon.

The reason why Salome was alone must be given. Before starting on the excursion, Philip said to his wife, 'Let me have a minute alone with that person. I'll make some sort of apology, and set all to rights.'

Accordingly Salome had dropped back where the road made its first twist. But this does not explain why she remained alone for more than the minute. That this may be understood, it will be necessary to follow the conversation that passed between Philip and 'that person.'

'My wife has found a pink,' said Philip; 'she is fond of flowers.' Then, as Miss Durham said nothing, he added, 'I afforded you some amusement at dinner.'

'Amusement?'

'Apparently. It is not pleasant to be an object of criticism. If you desired to punish me for my indiscretion, you must be satisfied. You made me very uncomfortable.'

'Amusement! Oh! do you mean when Colonel Yeo laughed and look at you? I saw you turn red.'

'Enough to make a man turn red, when aimed at by the bow and arrow of female lips and tongue.'

'You are quite mistaken,' said Miss Durham, laughing. 'I was not shooting any poisoned arrow. Do you desire to know what I said?'

'Interest me it must, as I was the object of the arrow, even if tipped with honey.'

'Very well, you shall know. I had seen you looking at the eagle in his cage. And I said to Colonel Yeo that the eagle reminded me of you.'

Philip winced. He remembered his own estimate of that wretched bird.

'And pray,' said he, 'why am I like the eagle?'

'Because both are in situations for which neither was designed by nature. Do you suppose the eagle looks the draggled, disconsolate bird he does now, when on wing soaring over the glaciers? Were his wings made that they might droop and drop their crushed feathers? That stern eye, that it should stare at iron bars, at inquisitive faces peering between them? Now, come, be open; make me your confessor. Have you never had yearnings for something nobler, freer, than to be behind the bars of a counting-house, and condemned to the perpetual routine of business, like the mill of a squirrel's cage?'

Philip considered. Yes, he had wished for a less monotonous life. He had often desired to be able to hunt and shoot, and move in cultivated society, tour in Europe, and have leisure to extend his thoughts to other matters than the details of a lawyer's office, or a manufacturer's set of books.

'Your time is all barred,' continued Miss Durham, 'and the music of your life must be in common time. No elasticity, no initiative, all is barred and measured. Tell me something about yourself.'

’I!’ This was a daring question to address to one so reserved as Philip. ’I have had nothing occur in my life that could interest you.’

’Because it has been spent in a cage. I know it has. I can see the gaol-look in your face, in your back, in the way you wear your hair, in your coat, in your every action, and look, and tone of voice.’

’This is not complimentary.’

’It is true. But you were not made to be a gaol-bird. No one is; only some get caught early and are put behind bars, and see the world, and know it, only through bars; the wind blows in on them only between bars, and the sun is cut and chopped up to them by bars and cross-bars, and all they know of the herbs and flowers are the scraps of chickweed and plantain, drooping and dying, that are suspended to their cage bars for them to peck at. I know exactly what they come to look like who have been encaged all their lives; they get bald on the poll and stiff in their movements, and set in their back, and dull of eye, and narrow of mind.’

’You—have you not been a cage-bird?’ asked Philip with some animation.

’Oh no, not I. I have kept outside the bars. I have been too fond of my liberty to venture behind them.’

’What do you mean by bars?’ asked Philip, with some gravity in his tone.

’Bars? There are bars of all sorts—social, religious, conventional—but there! I shock you; you have lived so long behind them, that you think the bars form the circumference of the world, and that existence is impossible, or improper outside of them.’

’Beyond some none are at liberty to step. They are essential.’

’I am not talking of the natural, but of the artificial restraints which cramp life. Have you any Bohemian blood in you?’

’Bohemian!’

’Wild blood. I have. I confess it. A drop, a little drop, of fiery African blood. You in England have your class distinctions, but they are nothing beside our American separations between white and black. With you a blot on the escutcheon by a *mésalliance* is nothing; with us it is ineradicable. There is a bar sinister cast over my shield and shutting me out from the esteem of and association with those whose blood is pure. Pure! It may be muddied with the mixture of villainous blood enough—of swindlers and renegades from justice, but that counts nothing. One little drop, an eighth part of a drop, damns me. I do not care. I thank that spot of taint. It has liberated me from conventional bonds, and I can live as I like, and see the sun eye to eye without intervening bars.’

Philip had winced when she spoke about the co-existence of pure blood with that of swindlers and renegades. He stopped and looked back.

They had been walking fast, though up-hill. When talkers are excited and

interested in what they say they naturally quicken their pace. They had far outstripped Salome; as Philip looked back he could not see her, for the ground fell away steeply and concealed the several folds of the road.

'What?' asked Miss Durham mockingly, 'looking for one of your bars?'

Philip turned and walked on with her. They had reached the summit, and the ground before them was level. On this track of level mossy moor lay the lake of deep crystal water, in which floated masses of snow or ice, that had slidden from the mountain on the opposite side. Hardly a tree grew here, on this neck, exposed to furious currents of wind.

'May I take your arm?' asked Miss Durham. 'I am heated and tired with this long climb.'

Philip offered her the support she demanded.

'I suppose,' she said, 'that you have not associated much with any but those who are cage-birds?'

He shook his head and coloured slightly.

'Do you know what I am?' she asked abruptly, and turned and looked at him, loosing her hand from his arm.

'I have heard that you are a lady with a large independent fortune.'

'It is not true. I earn my living. I am a singer.'

She saw the surprise in his face, which he struggled to conceal.

'It is so; and I am here in this clear air that my voice may regain its tone. I sing—on the stage.'

She put her hand through his arm again.

'Yes, chained, imprisoned eagle, I am a free singing-bird. What do you say to that?'

What could he say? He was astonished, excited, bewildered. He felt the intoxication which falls on an evangelical preacher when he mounts the platform to preach in a music-hall. He was frightened and pleased; his decorum shaken to its foundation, and cracking on all sides.

'What do you say to that?' she asked, and looked full in his eyes, and her splendid orbs shot light and fire into his heart and sent the flames leaping through his veins. He heaved a long breath.

'Yes,' she said, 'you suffocate behind bars.'

Then she burst into a merry peal of laughter, and Philip involuntarily

laughed also, but not heartily.

CHAPTER XLVI.
ARTEMISIA.

'There is the restaurant,' said Miss Durham, 'and being painted within and without, impossible for us to enter. What say you to walking on to the head of the lake? I want to look over the *col*, and see the mountains of the Rhine valley above Dissentis.'

Philip hesitated, and again looked back.

'I see,' said Miss Durham; 'you are afraid of stepping out of your cage.'

'Not at all,' answered Philip, flushing. 'I am prepared to go to the end of this trough in the mountains with you, but I greatly doubt seeing much from the further end.'

'Well—if we see nothing, we can talk. Have you looked about you much since we began the ascent?'

'The time has flown,' said Philip, looking at his watch. 'It seems to me but a few minutes since.'

The long dreary valley or basin in which lay the lake was apparently closed at the end by a hill surmounted by a cross or flagstaff. The road ran along the north side of the lake, without a tree to shade it. The party behind, when they came to the restaurant, could not fail to see them if they continued along the road, and might follow, or await them there.

Philip walked on, but no longer gave Artemisia Durham his arm. He saw far away in the rear Mrs. Sidebottom signalling with her parasol; but whether to him, or to the Labarte girls who were dispersed in the morass at the end of the lake, picking butterwort, soldanella, and primula, he could not tell.

His eyes were on the ground. He was thinking of his companion, what a strange life hers must be, incomprehensible to him. He felt how, if he were thrown into it, he would not know how to strike out and hold his chin above water. At the same time his heart beat fast with a wild vain desire for a freer life than that of commerce.

The restraints to which he had been subjected had compressed and shaped him, as the Chinese lady's shoe compresses and shapes her foot—but the pressure had been painful; it had marked him, but the marks were ever sensitive. The

ancient robe of the Carmelite fathers was of white wool barred with black, and they pretended that they derived this habit from the mantle of Elijah, which he had dropped as he was being carried up to heaven, and the mantle had touched as it fell the spokes of the chariot of fire in which he ascended, and was scorched in stripes. Philip, and many another successful man of business who has been exalted to a position of comfort and warmth, has the inner garment of his soul scarred by the wheels of the chariot in which he has mounted. Philip felt his own awkwardness, his want of ease in other society than that narrow circle in which he had turned, his inability to move with that freedom and confidence which characterizes those born and reared in generous society. Even with this girl—this Bohemian—he was as one walking and talking with chains to his feet and a gag to his tongue. She was right; he was born to be at ease everywhere, to be able everywhere to walk upright, and to look around him; he had been put in a cramping position, tied hand and foot, and his head set in such a vice as photographers employ to give what they consider support and steadiness, and he was distorted, stiffened, contracted. Had his life been happy? He had never accounted it so—it had been formal at the solicitor's desk, and it was formal in the factory. Was man made and launched into life to be a piece of clockwork? He had thought, acted, lived an automaton life, and taken his pleasure in measuring glasses, never in full and free draughts.

'Have you had a happy existence?' he asked thoughtfully.'

'Oh yes, the birds are happy; all nature is happy so long as it is free. It is in the cage that the bird mopes, and in the pot that the plant sickens.'

Had Philip looked in her face he would have seen a strange expression of triumph pass over it. She had carried her first point and gained his interest.

'Here,' she said, 'is a large rock above the water; let us sit on it, and I will tell you about myself. You had no confidence in me, and would not give me your story. I will return good for evil, and show you my past. I agree with you, there will be no view of the mountains above Dissentis from the *col.* It is not worth our while going on. Besides, I am tired.'

She took a seat on a broad boulder that had fallen from the mountains, and hung fast, wedged on one side, disengaged on the other, over the crystal water that, stirred by the light wind, lapped its supports. Looking into the clear flood beneath, they could see the char darting about, enjoying the sun that penetrated the water and made it to them an element of diffused light.

Artemisia pointed to them, and said:

'Who would not rather be one of these than a goldfish in a glass bottle?'

Philip at once recalled the pond at Mergatroyd, with the hot water spurted into it from the engine, in which the goldfish teemed, and the globes in every cottage-window supplied with the unfortunate captives from this pond, swim-

ming round and round all day, all night, every year, seeing nothing novel, without an interest, a zest in life. Such had his career been; he, a fish—not a gold one, nor even a silver one till recently, but quite a common brown fish—in a common glass receiver full of stale water, renewed periodically, but always flat.

He looked at the darting char with interest.

'We are in the land of freedom,' said Miss Durham. 'Then don't stand on the rock like a semaphore. Sit down beside me, and let your feet dangle over the water. Oh! as Polixenes says, "to be boy eternal!"'

'"With such a day to-morrow as to-day,"' added Philip, completing the quotation, as he seated himself on the rock.

How wonderfully brilliant the sun was at that height! So utterly unlike the rusty ball that gave light at Mergatroyd, and there gave it charily. How intense the blue of the sky!—dark as the deep-belled gentian, not the washed-out cobalt of an English heaven. And the air was fresh; it made the heart dance, and the pulses throb faster, with a trip and a fandango such as the blood never attains in our gray and sober land.

At a few hundred yards' distance was a road-mender leisurely performing his task, repairing a track made by a stone that had leaped from the cliffs above, torn up the road, and then plunged into the lake. Far behind could be seen Mrs. Sidebottom flourishing her parasol and gathering the rest of the disconnected party together before the restaurant.

It was clear that she had decided they were not to go further, but to rest at one of the tables in the open air beside the lake, till it pleased the two of the advanced party to return.

Had they been seen? Philip asked himself. Where he and Artemisia now sat, they were screened from observation from the tavern, though not from the road-mender, who was ahead on the way.

'I am not quite sure,' said Philip, and he fidgeted with his fingers as he said it, 'I think I ought to be going back to the party—to my aunt.'

'To your wife, you mean. Why not say so? No; you shall not go. There are plenty with her, five in all, and I—I have only you.'

A flutter and then a scalding rush of blood through Philip's veins.

'This is the land of freedom,' said Artemisia; 'as you came over the Lake of Lucerne you saw Rütli, the sacred spot where the three confederates swore to shake off the chains that bound them and to be free, and its freedom is the glory of Switzerland now. Let this be Rütli. Break those conventional bonds that have tied you, and as a pledge remain seated and listen to me. Remember what I have told you—I want to give you a peep into my past life, and have your advice.'

Philip made no more objection, but he plucked little scraps of sedum that grew on the stone and threw them into the water. Presently fish came to snap at

them, and turned away in disgust, leaving them, when they saw they were not flies nor worms.

'My mother,' said Miss Durham, 'was a German—that is how I can speak the language with as much ease as English. She was married to my father shortly after her arrival in America, and she never acquired the English tongue perfectly; she always spoke it with an accent and intonation that was foreign. But, though she did not acquire perfectly the language of the country of her adoption, she assimilated its prejudices pretty easily, and held them with that intensity which characterizes, in my experience, acquired prejudices, especially when unreasonable. My father had in him a couple of drops of dark blood, and although my mother thought nothing of that when she took him, she speedily came to regard it as an indelible stain. She threw it in his teeth, she fretted over it, and when I was born did not regard me with the love a child has a right to exact from its mother. The continual quarrels and growing antipathy between my parents led at length to their separation. My father left, and I believe is dead; I never saw him after they parted. He may have married again. I do not know; but I believe he is dead. He made no inquiries after me and my mother, to whom I was a burden and a reproach; she looked about for, and secured another, a more suitable partner, a German, working in a factory. They had children, fair-haired, moon-faced, thick-set—and I was alone amidst them, the drudge or enemy of all. I had a good voice, and I was made nurse to the youngest children, and to still them I was accustomed to sing to them. The eldest boy had a clear good voice also, and him I liked best of all my half-brothers and sisters. It was a great amusement to us to follow brass bands, or Italians with organs and monkeys; and when we saw how that these obtained money, my brother Thomas and I agreed together that we would try our luck. One day—it was the day of the Declaration of Independence, when everyone was out and all enjoying themselves—Tom and I went into the most-frequented avenue of our town, and began to sing. Carriages with ladies and gentlemen passed, and troops of people in their best clothes, all in good humour, and all seeking amusement. We began to sing "Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten," Tom taking a second. Some Germans at once gathered about us, and threw coppers into Tom's cap. Presently a man came up with a red beard and a violin. He stood for a long time listening, and then instead of giving us money he asked where we lived, and what our parents were. I told him, and next day he came to see my mother. He was a musician, and he offered to buy me of her, that he might teach me to sing and accompany him.'

Philip's face grew gray, and the lines in it became more marked. He no longer threw bits of sedum at the fish. He clutched the rock with both hands.

'And—what did your mother say?' he asked.

'She sold me—for seventy-five dollars.'

Philip shuddered. He turned and looked in Artemisia's face—to see, perhaps, if her story had left its traces there.

'She wanted a hundred dollars, he offered fifty. They came to terms for seventy-five.'

Philip said nothing. He looked down into the bottle-green depths of the lake, and for some moments Artemisia was silent also.

Presently—with a strange, forced voice—Philip asked:

'How old were you when this transaction took place?'

'Still a child. I travelled about with the red-bearded man, and he taught me to sing, trained me well, and at concerts made me sing, and I got great applause. I liked that. I was happier with him than at my mother's; I had no babies to carry about, and to hush; none of the house drudging to do. Besides, he was kind, and he was an honourable man after his fashion. He treated me as if I were his daughter, and took immense pains to form me to be a public singer. But always the burden of his song was, "See what you cost me, what trouble you give me! Afterwards, when you are a finished artist, you must be engaged to me for a set of years and repay me for my pains." I had not a word against that. I was quite aware that I was indebted to him, and I intended to show my gratitude by doing as he required. So I grew up, going about with him, and he never allowed me to be treated with impertinence by any man; he always protected me, though not always in the most heroic manner. Once, in California, we were performing, he with his fiddle and I singing, at a liquor-bar, when a half tipsy gold-digger became offensively attentive to me. My master made me leave the place with him, and he ran away with me to San Francisco. I asked him why? He said that he must do that, or shoot or be shot by that fellow, and he had no wish for either. I remember sulking; I would have liked to see them fight about me.'

'How long did you remain with this man?'

'Till I was eighteen, and then, just as I was fit for something better, and to earn more money, my master spoiled his own game.'

'How so?'

'He wanted to marry me. I reckon he thought he could secure me best that way. If he had not asked me, and himself pestered me about this, I would have stayed with him and let him have a share—a lion's share, of my earnings; but he would not leave me in peace—he spoiled his own game by that, and set me free. I left him.'

'And then?'

'Oh! I have been independent since then. I have sung in America, but I have met with most success in Germany. I go about where I will. I have no master. I earn enough to enable me out of the opera season to go to the mountains or the seaside. This is a dull spot, and I would not have made so long a stay in it had it

not been that I was ordered to the elevated air here, because I had suffered from a relaxed or overstrained organ. Now you know my story. What do you think of it?'

Philip was watching her face, and feeling as if he received a shot in his heart every time she turned her splendid full eyes on him, and his hands trembled as they held the stone. 'Ever since I left my red-bearded master I have been alone—alone in the world; I have had no one to whom to cling, no mind to which to go for advice in times of doubt and distress. Alone—do you know what it is to be alone?'

'Yes,' said Philip; he let sink his head on his breast, and looked down into the water. He also had spent a lonely youth, but in what opposite circumstances!

'You can have no idea,' she continued, 'how I have longed, with agony of heart, for someone—someone whose judgment I could trust, whose mind was superior, whose experience had been made in just those departments of life to which I am strange. I have longed for such an one, whom I could regard as a very dear friend, and to whom I could go in trouble and perplexity. But I have no one! For all these years I have been as much alone as the man in the moon.'

Philip put his hand to his collar. He tried to straighten the points which had become limp—his hand shook so that he could do nothing with them; he was being burnt up, consumed, by her eyes which were on him as she spoke of her desire to find a friend.

'Is it not strange,' she said, 'that I who have been preaching freedom should feel the need of a bar—not of many, but just one to hold by. Do you know what it is to stand at the verge of a precipice? To stand on a spire top where there is sheer abyss on every side? Can you imagine the giddiness, the despair that comes over one? My place is one surrounded by precipices, dangers, everywhere; I see hands thrust out to give me the push to send me over, but not one—no, not one—to hold me.'

'You have mine,' said Philip, and laid his on her wrist. She took his hand and pressed it thankfully.

'Now,' she continued, 'you can understand what it must be to one on a dizzy peak, or apex of a building, if there be a something—a bar even, to which to hold. Then the abysses below can be gazed into with impunity. Holding to that support, the dangers are no longer dreadful, there is no more fear of falling out of sheer desperation.'

She let go Philip's hand, and stood up.

'It is time to return to our party. Oh, what a relief it has been to me to pour out my heart to you! And now, in return, tell me about Colonel Yeo.'

The sound of that name at once brought Philip to his senses. He rose to his feet and stepped into the road.

’I am sorry to be unable to tell you about him, because I know little about him. As I said before, we belong to different spheres.’

They walked back together, talking of the weather and the mountains and flowers, and found the rest at a table. The restaurant was under repair, and no refreshments could be obtained there.

’Well?’ said Mrs. Sidebottom, ’you have kept us waiting a long time.’

’We have been waiting for you,’ said Miss Durham. ’We thought you would come on to the head of the pass.’

Philip caught Salome’s eye and avoided it. She looked wistfully, wonderingly at him. What did he mean by at one minute treating the American lady with coldness and rudeness, and then reversing his behaviour towards her absolutely and at once?

She took her husband’s arm as they walked back to Andermatt. Philip was silent. He thought about the story he had heard, of the loneliness of the poor girl who had confided her history to him.

’What a long way this is, dear!’ said Philip. ’It seems an age since we began the descent.’

CHAPTER XLVII.
EDELWEISS.

Philip could not sleep during the night that followed the expedition to the Ober-Alp. His mind was occupied with what he had heard. He thought of the poor girl, sold by her mother; of her rude apprenticeship, of the risks she had undergone; beautiful, young, attractive. He tossed in his bed. What would become of her? Could she stand exposed to the dangers that beset her and not, as she half-threatened, throw herself over? What could be done for her?

She had spoken of the freedom of her life as giving zest to existence, but too great freedom may pall; it had palled on the girl, and she had put up her hands, pleading to be fitted with light but strong manacles. What a contrast was to be found between his life and hers! He had been cramped and hedged about with restrictions: she had enjoyed an excess of liberty. Virtue, says Aristotle, is to be found in a happy medium, and not virtue only, but the plenitude and manifoldness of life can only unfurl itself in a happy medium between excess of freedom and oppressive restriction. Philip was and ever had been conscious

that his abilities had not been allowed due expansion in the career into which he had been squeezed; and this American girl, with doubtless splendid capabilities of mind and heart, had allowed them to run riot and dissipate their fragrance in untutored independence. When she fixed her great dark eyes on him, what a thrill passed through him! and when she took his hand, fire ran up his veins, and broke into a blaze in his heart.

What could he do for her? How was it possible for him to assist her? to be to her the wise friend she desired? If he had made her acquaintance two years ago it would have been another matter, he would have thrown himself at her feet—metaphorically, of course—and asked her to take him as her guide, protector, and friend, to tie up her future with his, and so each would have contributed something to the other to make up what each lacked. Then what a different sort of life his would have been! His present mode of existence was similar, only better in quality, to that he had led before; one had been a sordid drudgery, the present was a gilded drudgery. The difference was in the adjective that qualified, not in the substance of which the stuff of his life was made up. He had now to devote the same attention to figures and technicalities and details as before. The figures, technicalities, details, were formerly relative to conveyancing, they now concerned linen manufacture. Such acquaintances as he had formed at Nottingham had not been interested in much beyond their business, and the acquaintances he had formed at Mergatroyd had their interests concentrated on their business. Art, literature, science, had been to those he knew at Nottingham, and were to those he knew at Mergatroyd, names, not ideas. Was life worth living in such surroundings, tied to such a routine? It is said that man as he gets older fossilizes, the currents of his blood choke the arteries, veins, vessels of heart and brain, till like furred waterpipes and crusted boilers they can no longer act. But was not the life to which he was condemned, with its monotony, its constraint, its isolation from the current of intellectual life—a mechanizing of man? Philip knew that he was losing, had lost, much of his individuality, almost all the spontaneity that had been lodged in him by the Creator, and was growing more and more into a machine, like his spinning-jennies and steam looms. He thought of Salome. Had she many ideas outside the round of ordinary life? Was she not an ennobled, sweeter lodging-house keeper? She had been well educated, but her mind did not naturally soar into the ideal world. It went up, spasmodically, like the grasshoppers, a little way, and was down on its feet again directly. She was interested in her baby, anxious to have her house neat, the cobwebs all away, the linen in perfect order, all the towels marked and numbered, the servants in thorough activity, the quotients for the cake and pudding measured in scales, not guessed. She was devoted to her flowers also—he recollected the hyacinths, and certainly they had filled his room with fragrance and anticipations of spring.

But he had sent her to sleep by reading aloud Addison's 'Spectator,' and when he tried Shakespeare he found that she had no insight into the characters, and accepted the beauties rather than seized on them.

What, Philip asked with a tremor—what if he had never met Salome, and had met Artemisia? Then indeed he would have been transported on strong wings out of the world of common-place, and the sound of common talk, and the murky atmosphere of vulgar interests, into a region where he would have shaken off his half-acquired habits of formality, his shyness, his cumbrousness and angularity, and become light-hearted, easy, and independent.

In dreams we sometimes imagine ourselves to be flying; we rise from the ground and labour indefatigably with our arms as wings; and Philip was now dreaming, though not asleep, fancying that he could part with some of his gravity and by an effort maintain himself in another sphere. He had missed his way in life; he was never designed to become a piece of clockwork, but to enjoy life, seize it with both hands, and hold it fast, and drink the mingled cup to the dregs, crowned with roses. Hitherto he had not suspected that the blood in his arteries was an effervescing wine; he had supposed it very still.

What was to be done for Artemisia? It would be inhuman, not to be reconciled with conscience, to turn away, to cast her off, when she entreated him to be her friend and help her with counsel. But how could he assist her? A drowning, despairing girl cried out for help. Could he suffer her to sink? Had he not promised her his assistance?

'I am positively determined,' said Mrs. Sidebottom, next day, 'that we shall go to-morrow to the hospice. I want to see it, and the dogs, and the scenery. So I have ordered carriages; and what is more, we will stay there a day or two; then, such as like, can descend the Val Tremola, and such as like can climb the Pizzo Centrale.'

'I have no objection.' answered Salome. 'We must not leave Andermatt until we have been over the pass and seen the beauties or terrors of the further side. What do you say, Philip?'

'I shall be glad.'

He stood up from table.

'Where are you going, Philip?'

'To Miss Durham, to invite her to join us.'

'Of course,' said Mrs. Sidebottom. 'Let me see, we are eight. Oh! it won't matter, one of the girls can sit outside. The drivers always walk going up hill, so that there will be five in one carriage, and five in the other. And Miss Durham will pay her share. Besides, if there is any climbing and excursioning to be done, she will pay half of a guide.'

But—strange caprice in Salome, she put her hand on Philip's arm, and said,

in a low tone:

'No! Philip; no!'

Philip looked at her with surprise. Why should she not wish the American lady to join the party? She was her friend. She had been so desirous that he and Miss Durham should conclude peace, and now that peace was agreed upon, Salome said, 'No! Philip; no!' when he proposed to invite the Chicago girl to join them. How capricious! How unreasonable Salome was! She forms a wish, he hastens to accord it, and lo! she hangs back and is dissatisfied.

His aunt's favourite expression, 'Fiddlestick-ends!' rose to his lips. He was not the man to be turned about by the wayward, unreasoned fancies of his wife.

'Why not?' he asked.

But Salome gave him no answer. She had formed no motive in her heart for asking him not to invite Miss Durham; she had not considered a reason. She reddened to the roots of her hair, but neither gave a reason nor repeated her request.

There lingered all that day a little something, a dissonance of mood between Philip and Salome; neither could account for it, and neither attempted to account for it. He was silent; he wandered about the hotel and the grounds with a hope to light on Miss Durham He did not go into the *salle* or on the terrace, into the reading-room, or about the garden searching for her. He did not ask the waiters where she was, but he looked about wherever he went, expecting to see her, and when he found her not in the reading-room or *salle*, on the terrace or in the garden, he felt that the place was uninteresting, and he must perforce go elsewhere.

Salome was gentle as usual, spending much time with her baby, showing it to those guests who were so gracious as to notice it, and smiling with pleasure when it was admired; but she was not herself, not as happy as she had been. Hitherto the only jar to her content was her husband's prejudice against Artemisia; now the jar arose—she did not explain to herself how it arose, but she wished that Philip had not gone so far in his change of sentiment. Yet with her natural modesty and shrinking from casting blame, she reproached herself for grudging to her friend that friendship which she had herself invited Philip to bestow.

The next day was lovely, with a cloudless sky, and the carriages departed. Some grumbling ensued and had to be resisted, on the part of the drivers, because five persons were crammed into one carriage. Mrs. Sidebottom pointed out that the driver would walk. That was true, was the reply, but not till Hospenthal was reached; moreover the horses could not draw more than four up the St. Gothard road to the hospice. There was still snow over a considerable tract; however, at length the difference was overcome by the promise of a small extra payment—two and a half francs extra—which threw such energy into the horses, and so

increased their power of traction, that they consented for that price to draw five instead of four persons up the ascent from Hospenthal to the hospice. In one carriage, that in front, sat Mrs. Sidebottom, Janet and the captain, and one of the girls, the youngest. In the other carriage were Salome and Miss Durham, Philip, and the two other Labarte girls.

But Philip did not remain long in it; at the steep ascent above the little picturesque cluster of houses, church, and castle that constitute Hospenthal, he got out and walked. The banks were overgrown with the Alpine rhododendron, as flames bursting out of the low olive-green bushes, and Philip hastened to pick bunches for the ladies. By a singular chance the best flowers and those best arranged went to Miss Durham.

'See dere?' said the driver, taking off his hat. 'Vot ish dat? Dat is edelweiss. You shee?'

He held his dirty brown cap to Philip and showed him a tuft of white flowers as though made out of wool. Philip had never seen the like before.

'Are these found here, in these mountains?'

'Jawohl! round here. Up high! Shee!' The man pointed with his whip to the rocky heights. 'She grow up very high, dat vlower you give to your loaf!'

'Loaf?'

'Jawohl!' The man winked, put his hand to his heart. 'To your loaf—shatz! You undershtand.'

Philip flushed dark. He was hot with walking.

'Let me have some of that flower. You shall have it back. No, thank you, not your hat.'

The man pulled the blossoms out from the dirty ribbon that retained them. 'Dey is dry. But you should shee when dey fresh.'

Philip took the little flowers to the side of the carriage.

'Look at these,' he said. 'The man calls them—no, I cannot say the name.'

'Edelweiss,' said Salome; 'I have seen it dried in the shop windows. It is rare.'

'Edelweiss means the noble white flower,' said Miss Durham. 'It grows far from human habitation, and is much sought after. I have never found it myself, and never had any fresh picked given to me.'

'Would you like some?' asked Philip.

'Very much indeed,' answered Artemisia.

'If it be possible to get any, you shall have it,' he said. Then he walked on.

The fore carriage was stopped, and Mrs. Sidebottom was descending with Claudine Labarte, whom she had persuaded to get out with her and pick flowers, thus leaving the captain and Janet by themselves.

'Before long,' said Mrs. Sidebottom, 'we shall be beyond the line where

flowers grow, so we must make the best of our opportunity now, Miss Labarte.'

Then Mrs. Sidebottom fell back to where Philip was and took his arm, and pressed it, looked up at him humorously and said, 'I have a bit of news to tell you. He is going to propose. That is why I have got Félicité out of the carriage.'

'Who? Lambert?'

'Lambert, of course. Not the driver. And to Janet. Have you not seen it coming?'

'But perhaps she will not have him.'

'Fiddlestick-ends! Of course she will. Don't you see that she likes him, and has been drawing him on? Besides, I have sounded her. The only difficulty is about Salome.'

'How can she be a difficulty?'

'Oh, she may think it too soon for them to get married when Mrs. Cusworth died so recently.'

'Then they can postpone the marriage.'

'Fiddle-faddle! Of course not. Always strike whilst the iron is hot. That is edelweiss in your hand, is it? Oh, could you manage to find or get a man to find some quite fresh, for Lambert to present to Janet. It is the correct thing in the Alps. The graceful accompaniment of a declaration.'

'I will try to get some,' said Philip.

'Lambert, you see, will be too much engaged with Janet to go far himself; besides, he is not able to take great exertion. Climbing has a deteriorating effect on the trouser-knees, it makes them baggy. You will get him some?'

'I will go searching for edelweiss when we reach the hospice,' said Philip. To himself he muttered, 'But not for Lambert and Janet.'

CHAPTER XLVIII.
TRAPPED.

For the last hour of the ascent the carriages passed through snow, not continuous, but between walls cut in the avalanches and drifts that had formed in the basins. The air was cold. The ground was so wet through melted snow that Philip and Mrs. Sidebottom and Mdlle. Labarte were obliged to ride. The walls of snow had fallen in here and there, so that the horses were obliged to flounder through. The scenery was bleak and wintry. The ladies shivered. At length the lake was

reached in which the Reuss has its source, and a little beyond it the roofs of the hospice and the inn were visible. In ten minutes the shivering party was assembled in the *salle-à-manger*, which was heated, and was ordering dinner.

The monks had been banished for many years, and the hospice let by the Canton of Tessin to an inn-keeper of Airolo, who with his worthy wife and family have been in no way inferior in hospitality, in care for the poor travellers, and in providing for the comforts of the rich than were the brothers of old.

Signora Lombardi, stout, hale, and smiling, was in the hospice, exerting all her energies to get food ready for the large party that had come in. Wines—the best of North Italy, were to be had, and veal in various forms—but always veal, call it what you will.

'Oh! my goodness, gracious me!' cried Mrs. Sidebottom, 'there is a dog—a Mount St. Bernard dog! Oh! the size! the beauty! It must become the rage. Why—I have heard of more than two hundred pounds being given for a tulip, and what would not be given for such a dog as this—and with pulmonary complaint too, that develops on the plains.'

'You do not mean to say, aunt, that you are going to invest in shares in the Beaple Yeo dog-breeding establishment?' said Philip satirically.

'Colonel Yeo are you speaking about?' interrupted Miss Durham eagerly. 'Do tell me—do you think he will establish his claims to the title of Schofield?'

'He can establish his title to that name whenever he pleases,' said Philip, 'and—once more, if you have any regard for our feelings, you will not mention that person again in our hearing. Oh! here—in this glass on the table—are some draggled specimens of the white fluffy flower you call edelweiss. Perhaps our landlady, Signora Lombardi, will tell us if it grew near this inn.'

'Oh, signor,' answered the stout woman, 'it is to be found by the searchers, but I have never discovered it. I am too fat to climb, and, besides, my day for edelweiss is over.' She laughed and shook her sides as though she had made a good joke. 'I leave the edelweiss to the young people.' Her eye rested with a sly twinkle, first on the captain and Janet, about whom there could be no doubt, and then on Philip and—her eye hesitated a moment between Salome and Artemisia, and then rested on the latter. Philip looked uneasily out of the little window at the bleak outer world.

When dinner was finished the afternoon was advanced. Philip went out in front of the inn, on the platform of rock upon which it is built. Some of the ladies talked of taking a stroll to the head of the Val Tremola, but determined not to go far, they would reserve their strength for the ensuing day. He did not volunteer to accompany them. He had another scheme in his head. Outside the inn was a guide lounging about, smoking and calling to such as passed in the road.

Philip signed to him that he desired to speak to him, and the man came to

him with alacrity, but shook his head, and pointed to one of the snowpeaks. He could speak only Italian, and Philip only English. They were obliged to converse in dumb show. Philip showed him the flower of edelweiss he had brought from the glass on the table inside. The man nodded his head. Philip raised his eyebrows in note of query and pointed to the rocks around.

’Si! si!’ answered the man, shaking his head like a poised China mandarin.

’All about there? anywhere?’ asked Philip, speaking very loud, as though by loudness he could make the man comprehend.

’Oh! if it is anywhere I can find it easily.’

The man shook his head and again pointed to a snow-peak over which a film of cloud was forming, then being blown away, then forming again.

’Do you mean that it is not out there?’ asked Philip. ’I knew that as well as you. There are only ice and snow yonder. Bless my soul, what idiots these men are!’

Then he went back into the inn to equip himself with gaiters and strong boots, and to fetch his stick, with a chamois horn for a handle, that he had bought. Whilst he was engaged fastening his leggings, he heard the voices of the young ladies outside the house. They were starting for a walk. Presently he descended from his room and studied the map of the district, suspended in the *salle*, till he thought he had it well impressed on his brain, after which he sallied forth. The guide was no longer outside. The afternoon was verging to a close, and no one would be likely to require his services, he supposed; consequently he had retired to the lower room of the hospice on a level with the road, where the drivers and carriers, the guides and peasants were regaled with sour wine.

Philip was relieved to see that the fellow was no longer there. He might have wanted to come with him and show him the way, and it would have been irksome to trudge beside a man with whom it was not possible to converse; besides, edelweiss was to be found everywhere, Madame Lombardi had said, if looked for on the rocks. Those guides made difficulties about finding it, so as to induce the uninitiated and easily persuaded to engage them to direct them to spots where it grew. Philip resolved to go by himself. He would not go far; he could not lose his way; there were no yawning chasms down which he might tumble that he could see, and avalanches, he was told; fell in the early spring. He must do some climbing, of course, because the tourists would have picked all the edelweiss within reach on both sides of the road, and he must scramble to places they had not ransacked, but he would not go into any danger; he would keep his eye on the hospice, or at least, the road. Along the road he trudged in his heavy boots till he came to a great weather-beaten crucifix, that marked the beginning of the descent on the Italian side. The cross was painted dull red, but the paint had peeled away in patches, blistered by frost or sun. Philip looked up

wonderingly at it. How out of place it seemed there, in that wilderness of bare rock and pure snow! He seemed to be in the midst of a primeval world, which had not yet begun to produce green trees and herbs, the fowl and living beasts—all around was utter silence, the world around was lifeless. The sun was behind the great wall of snowy glacier mountains, and the vapour that was collected like smoke on its head, so that the prospect seemed to be that of a world such as existed when there was light but the sun was uncreate. And, in the centre of this inchoate, unvitalized world, stood the crucifix. The mountains looked down on it, the glaciers frowned on it, as a thing of to-day, as though they said, 'We were before ever you were dreamed of, and we shall be long after mankind has ceased to believe in self-devotion, and has come to laugh at every creed save the idolatry of self.'

Then Philip diverged from the road, and began to climb. There was a valley opening here from the highest peaks, down which a little rill fell; and on the flank of the mountain which faced the south there was comparatively little snow, and Philip saw tracts of moss and herbage. That would be the garden of the edelweiss; there he must search, and he would find the desired flower without serious trouble.

He was surprised to find the distances greater than they appeared. In that highly-rarefied and clear air things far off appeared close, and dimensions as well as distances were deceptive. He found green carpets of dwarf campion, studded with pink flower, dense as moss; and in the bogs soldanella shaking their delicately fringed purple bells—but no edelweiss. Disappointed in his search on the slope which had promised, he crossed the brook and crept along the flank of the opposite mountain; he would turn its shoulder and get to the side well exposed to the sun; that which he had just explored was, he now perceived, shut off from all but vertical rays by the mountain-ridge south of it. He groped and scrambled, turned back, went higher, had long lost sight of the hospice, had not, indeed, remembered to look for it, when suddenly he was enveloped in dense white fog. He could, however, see the sun through it like a copper ball, but only for a minute, and then it sank behind a ridge, at least so he supposed, for it was extinguished gradually. He must now retrace his steps. He dare not advance; he thought he could find his way back. He remembered several landmarks—a rock, on the top of which was some dwarf shrub, like a wig worn by an old fellow he knew at Nottingham, and a furrow which, if he followed it, must lead him to the brook. But he soon found that he had lost all sense of direction; the disappearance of the sun had taken from him the only clue as to the points of the compass.

He was hot. He sat down for a moment and wiped his face; the water was streaming off it. He was not as yet alarmed, only vexed—vexed especially at his having made this expedition in vain. He would have to return without the

edelweiss.

'That is old Jarvis's head with the wig thrust back!' he said, as a nodule of rolled rock appeared through the mist. But when he took a second look at it he doubted.

'I wish I had brought a whisky-flask with me,' he muttered; 'I am beginning to feel an ache in my muscles.'

He stumbled on, and now, to his alarm, saw that the darkness was closing in rapidly. He had not considered, when he started, that in the South of Europe there is no twilight, and that night comes after day without hours of grace.

Now it flashed upon him that what the guide had meant when indicating the mountain-top wreathed in vapour was—not that edelweiss grew there, but that the weather was going to change, or the fog to descend. He hurried on, but did not know in which direction he was going. He was on a steep slope of snow that stretched before him apparently interminably, lost itself in vapour and curled over and enveloped him as in an apple-pie bed, a cold sheet of white below, before, above, behind. And, at that moment, he saw on the rock above him, almost within reach, the white, starry, nodding head of an edelweiss; the woolly flower was burdened with the moisture that had condensed on it from the fog, and was hanging over the stone to shake itself free.

With an exclamation of satisfaction Philip sprang up the slope, caught the rock with the hook of his stick, and tore the edelweiss away.

Had the crook of his stick been what it professed to be—a chamois' horn, he would have been safe, it would have sustained his weight; but as it was only bone, and the curve came across the grain, it snapped, and Philip shot down the snowy declivity. He still grasped the tuft of edelweiss; he thrust his stick into the snow to arrest his descent; he tore up the snow, twisted the stick in his hand, and shot further down—shot instantaneously out of the fog into dusk, in which everything was distinct, and below he saw a great sweep of snow like a sheet. He looked into it as Sancho Panza into that in which he was being tossed. He drove his heels into the snow, his elbows, his stick, to retard his descent, and suddenly dropped. Then found himself on rubble, still sliding, and brought up with a jerk by a rock. For a few minutes Philip was unconscious. He was aware of a shock, a slide, darkness and noise, that was all. But—where was he? He had vanished from the face of the earth, gone through the surface of snow into a depth beneath. A field of snow had filled the bottom of a valley, and the river ran beneath in a ravine. Nothing could be seen of the cleft, nothing of the river, the smooth sheet of snow hid both; but the force of Philip's descent had broken through that portion of the covering where it was thinnest, near the rock and rubble; he had gone through, and was buried alive. Beneath him, about him, was darkness—pitch darkness; only above could he see the hole through which he had

fallen, looking like a silver-gray disc. The air about him was filled with thunder, the pulsating thunder such as he had heard at the fall of the Reuss at the Devil's Bridge, such as he had heard that very day where the river plunged over a wall of rock in the gorge above Hospenthal. The air moreover was as full of water here beneath as it had been above in the fog, but the particles here were much larger. This was the spray cast up by the raging, leaping, headlong water in the abyss.

How far down was it to that torrent? Eye could not penetrate, ear could not tell. The vault of snow overhead reverberated with the boom of the water, and cast it back into the gulf as it cast back the up-thrown spray. He could see no water, he could see nothing save the gap overhead.

What was he to do? His arms were heavy and numbed with cold. He cautiously lifted one and found that the snow had been driven, even rammed, hard up the sleeve by his descent. He was safe where he lodged, on rock, and he shook out the snow from one sleeve and then the other. In doing this he found the bunch of edelweiss. He did not see it; he felt it up his sleeve; it had been carried there by the snow. He did not throw it away; he left it where it was. What was he to do? His situation was precarious. He might turn giddy and fall over. That terrible fascination there is in an abyss might lay hold of him and draw him down. Artemisia had spoken of that fascination, the fascination of despair. Now he felt it.

He tried to scramble up, but the shale slipped away beneath his feet, and he was fain, in an agony of terror to recover his former place on firm rock. It was not practicable to ascend. He leaned back against the stones, that dripped and ran with water, the melting of the snow overhead, the condensation of the foam from the river beneath. The water condensed also on his forehead and ran off his brows—water cold as ice. Where his fingers worked hollows in the loose soil, the water settled, and soaked his fingers and turned them dead with cold.

Was it that there was rhythm in the fall of the water, or was it that his pulses beat in his ear and gave rhythm to the continuous thunder? He could not tell. He heard the throb of sound, or it seemed to him to be the rattle of the machinery of his mill at Mergatroyd multiplied to infinity.

His feet had glowed with the exercise, but now they began gradually to lose heat, and turn stone-cold. In time, they would cease to have feeling in them, then in numbness and weariness his knees would buckle under him, and he would shoot head-long, like a diver into the black void. How far down was it to the water—to death—he wondered. Would he feel—be conscious of the shock over the edge before he went into the water, or crash with his head against a rock? He had heard a fellow clerk say that as he was drowning the whole of his past life rushed before his eyes and spread itself out as a panorama, a succession of scenes, in a moment of time, twenty years unfolded leisurely in one second, displaying

every incident, not crowded but in sequence, and all articulate. Would it be so as he went over the edge, in the span of time between the rocks on which he stood and the clash and extinction below? His heart grew faint; and he felt in him the qualm that a bad sailor knows as the vessel plunges into a deep sea-trough.

But—surely he would be sought by the people at the inn. Certainly he would be sought, but in what direction would they look for him? How trace him in the mist? How suppose he was below the surface of the smooth quilt of snow in the Val Tremola, sunk out of sight, hanging over a boiling torrent? And now down past Philip ran a thread of silver; it startled him, and he looked up the line to see a glimpse of the moon appear above the hole through which he had fallen. The fog must have cleared away, or be clinging partially to certain mountain-tops. If the moon were clear, then the search for him could be prosecuted with some chance of success. But Philip was not over-confident. His powers of endurance were ebbing. He raised his feet and stamped on the rock; he could feel the shock in his joints, but not in his feet—they were dead. His hands were stiff. He put his fingers into his mouth, but this only momentarily restored vitality. After the feeling had gone the muscular power would become paralyzed. He was not hungry, but squeamish. He looked again at the moon, and continued watching it eagerly; it slid forward and shone full through the window of his dungeon. The light fell on rocky point and rill of leaping water, but could not illumine the abyss below, out of which rose the voices and thunderings—the voices of death, the thunderings preceding judgment.

And now the white ray of the moon smote down into the gulf below his feet and disclosed a shoot of the purest, most sparkling silver, the leaping torrent as it danced over a ledge into utter darkness, into which no moon-ray could dive.

Suddenly from above a mass of snow detached itself and fell past him, a mass so big that had it smitten him it would have carried him down with it.

The side of the hole in the snow-dome grazed the moon and ate more and still more out of it. Philip looked with fear—he felt that when the whole of the moon had passed beyond that opening, and not another ray fell into it, when again the darkness of that vault would become utter, hope would die away from his heart, and he must fall.

But as he stood looking up, watching the slipping away of the moon, he saw sharp cut against it a black something, and heard, above the roar of the water, the discordant sounds of a bark. He was found—found by one of the hospice dogs.

The first giddiness of renewed hope almost overcame him. He trembled as in a fit, and his knees bent so that only by a supreme effort of the will could he brace them again. He believed he heard shouts, but was uncertain.

What followed remained ever after confused in his memory. He heard some Italian words in his ear, saw or felt someone by him, was grasped, a rope fastened

round him, he heard himself encouraged to make an effort, tried to scramble, helped by the rope, broke through the snow, was in the upper world again, was surrounded, had brandy poured down his throat.

Then he was seized by the hand and shaken.

'Old fellow! Phil! 'Pon my word, you have given us a turn. We have been hunting you everywhere.'

'Lambert!'

'Yes, Phil, and who'd have thought to find you trapped under the snow?'

The men of the party urged immediate movement to restore circulation. Philip's hand, when dropped by Lambert, was seized again and held tightly, but he had lost feeling in it. Nor could he see clearly; he was dazzled by the light—the brilliance of the moon and the glare of the snow—after the darkness below.

'Who is that laughing?' he asked suddenly.

'Oh—Miss Durham,' answered Lambert.

'And—who is that crying?'

A whisper in his ear—'It is I—Salome.'

CHAPTER XLIX.

TÊTE-À-TÊTE.

Philip passed a night of pain and fever. He was bruised and shaken. His hands had been scarified in the slide down the rubble, and when circulation returned in them they bled. The exposure to cold had affected him, and he ached in every joint; his skin was as though red-hot plates had been passed over it. He could not sleep, for if he dropped out of consciousness it was into mental fear that he was falling down a precipice into the vortex of an unseen torrent, and he woke with a start that sent a thrill of torture through his strained nerves. He could not get the roar of the water out of his ears; he had carried it away with him in his head. Salome, at his request, to dispel it played the jingling piano in the *salle* underneath his room, but that was powerless to dissipate it. Then he sent his request to Miss Durham to sing. Perhaps her splendid voice might drive away the delusion. Her answer was that she had no voice. No voice! He knew that she had; she had boasted to him of it. He sent another message. Then came back the reply that she could not, and would not, sing to such a detestable little instrument as that in the *salle*.

Next day Philip was obliged to keep his bed. He was in discomfort and pain, and not the best of tempers.

'Salome,' said he, when his wife came to him with her fresh bright face full of sympathy and cheering? 'thank you for going on playing on the piano yesterday evening. Whilst you played I could forget the roar, but it returned directly that your fingers left the keys. I take it most unkind of Miss Durham that she would not sing.'

'Oh, Philip! don't you know that she has come to the high mountains to husband her voice, and it is possible that to sing at this great altitude—we are nearly seven thousand feet above the sea—might do it serious injury.'

'Why did she laugh when I was drawn out of the chasm?'

'Philip, dear, I cannot tell; but neither she nor I had any idea of the danger you had been in. The ravine was completely blocked up and sheeted over with snow, and we did not know anything of the horrible chasm down which the river plunged and through which it struggled. We only knew that you had gone through a crust of snow, and that you had to be drawn out.'

'But did you not hear the thunder of the torrent?'

'We did not particularly notice it—the roof of snow muffled it. You who were beneath heard it, but we—we may have heard something, but had no more idea of what there was beneath than you can have had when you slipped through.'

'It was very unfeeling of her to laugh.'

'Look here, Philip,' said Salome. 'In turning the sleeves of your coat inside out I have found these flowers—edelweiss, and fresh.'

'Yes, I found them.'

He considered for a moment, and then said: 'They are for you. Wear them, and let our party know that I did not encounter the risks I passed through without bringing back with me a prize.'

'Thank you, dear Philip;' she stooped over him and kissed his lips. 'Dear, dear Philip, I shall never part with them. It was most kind of you, and brave, too, to go in search of them for me.'

'Salome,' said he, 'don't let Lambert, and above all Mrs. Sidebottom, come and worry me to-day. I am in horrible pain, I cannot move, and I cannot bear to be bothered. You go down and take a little stroll; do not mind about me. I will try to doze. I had no sleep last night. I am turning all the colours of the rainbow, I was so bruised. I shall be right in a day or two. No bones are broken, but I cannot stir, and cannot endure to be worried; let me be quiet and a good deal to myself. I will sleep when I can.'

'May I sit by you a little?' she asked timidly. 'I will not speak—only hold your hand.'

She look his silence for consent. And he found comfort in her presence;

a soothing feeling crept up his arm from her hands that clasped his, and spread over his heart.

He was somewhat ashamed of himself. He had not made his expedition among the rocks, and met with his fall in searching for edelweiss for her, but for Artemisia. Salome had accepted the flower, and cherished it as if he had sought it for her, and he allowed her to remain in this delusion. Was this honourable? Was it in accordance with that strict rectitude on which he plumed himself? Yet he could not tell her the truth; it would wound her too deeply, and—humble himself too considerably.

Two days ago Artemisia Durham had taken his hand on the Ober-Alp, beside the lake, when he extended it to her in pledge that he would do great things for her; and now, in redemption of his pledge, he had tried to get her a bit of edelweiss, and had tumbled through the snow in his efforts. And what could he do for her? She had not asked for legal advice or for figured table-linen, the two things he could furnish her with without offence. It was as well that his hand was hurt—it served him right; he had no right to offer what he was unable to perform. How differently he had felt as Artemisia held his hand! Then an intoxicating current had set boiling through his veins, turning his head, maddening him. Now the cool hand of Salome conveyed balm to his aching joints, and what was a better medicine, though a bitter one, self-reproach to his conscience.

Now, also, for the first time since his walk with Miss Durham, some of his old suspicion oozed up through the joints of his thoughts. What was the reason of her laughter? Thrice it had occurred; first she had said something laughingly about him to Beaple Yeo at table, and provoked that odious creature to an explosion of laughter. Then, on the Ober-Alp Pass she had laughed for no particular reason that Philip could see, and had made Philip laugh with her. And, lastly, she had laughed mockingly, alone, when he was rescued from the very verge of a dreadful death.

He shut his eyes and lay still. Salome sat by him for an hour, and then, thinking he was asleep, released his hand, kissed him quietly, and stole from the room. Mrs. Sidebottom wanted to take a short walk; it was tedious in the inn, with only a few old and odd volumes of Tauchnitz novels about; and cold or inactivity was rendering the Labarte girls torpid, and they were clinging about Aunt Janet, or dropping upon her, at embarrassing times. Mrs. Sidebottom did not feel equal to managing all three unaided, and as Miss Durham declined to accompany her, she insisted on Salome lending her aid. Salome consented. Her husband had wished that she should go out, and he was asleep and could be left without anxiety. The girls had been shown at Andermatt beads and seals made of a sparkling stone, which was said to be found on the St. Gothard road, halfway down the Val Tremola, and when Mrs. Sidebottom proposed a walk they

entreated to be allowed to search for this precious stone, of which they resolved to compose necklaces for themselves, or at least bracelets. It would create quite a sensation at Elboeuf; not one of the girls there had seen this beautiful stone—not one probably had heard the name of Tremoline, by which it was called.

There was another reason why Mrs. Sidebottom, on this occasion, particularly desired the companionship of Salome. She was commissioned to break to her the news that Janet and Lambert were engaged, and to use her endeavours to overcome any prejudice Salome might entertain against the marriage being solemnized shortly, at Berne, at the Embassy. And Mrs. Sidebottom was about to attack her on this point by representing that she, Salome, was not the person to make objections when she herself had married Philip within a very short time of the supposed death of Uncle Jeremiah, who, though he was not her father, had stood to her much in the light of a parent.

Salome had observed that Janet and the captain took much delight in each other's society, but she had not given their association a serious thought; she knew that her sister liked lively society, and the captain had exhibited, whilst at Andermatt, an amount of vivacity and humour which she had not given him the credit of possessing. They were both interested in things of which she knew nothing, and naturally, therefore, sought each other's society. They were also connections in a roundabout fashion. Through Philip, Lambert became her cousin, and as Janet was her sister, he must be some sort of cousin to Janet. Quite near enough relation to remove starchness of intercourse, and place them on easy terms of cousinly association, that excused a good deal which would be inadmissible were they unrelated.

Philip heard the voices of the party outside the house, the crisp laughter of the girls, and the sawing tones of Mrs. Sidebottom, and then the sounds became distant, and ceased. His meditations were interrupted about a quarter of an hour later by three raps against the wall by his head. The several rooms in the inn were small, and divided from each other and from the passage by wood—not very thick deal boarding, papered over, but which in places had warped and split the paper. Signora Lombardi, every spring, with a pot of paste and some strips of paper, went about the rooms pasting over the rifts, disguising them, and preventing the partitions from being as diaphanous as they were diaphonous. German, Swiss and Italian beds are wooden boxes, narrow and short; and in such a bed against such a wall lay Philip, unable to move without torture.

Again three loud raps.

'Who is that?' he called.

'You are awake, Mr. Pennycomequick?' asked the voice of Miss Durham, almost in his ear. 'We are in adjoining stalls. I want a word with you, because I leave this insufferable place to-morrow, I can endure the cold and tedium no

longer; and before you return to the nether world, I may be away unless you descend in a *glissade*, and shoot through the roof of the Hôtel Impérial upon us into the midst of the table at dinner.'

Philip felt the partition between them shake. She was laughing. She had her chair against it, and leaned against it—to speak to him and to laugh at him.

'I must ask your pardon,' she said presently with a twitter in her tones from suppressed merriment; 'I did not realize your danger, or rather the danger you had escaped, when pulled out of the snow. But my laughter was excusable; you can have no conception how infinitely comic an object you presented; and the whole affair was so ridiculous. You—going aloft after edelweiss without the smallest acquaintance with its habitat, and with no experience to teach you how to keep your footing in Alpine altitudes, and shooting down, pop! through a hole into the nether world. And then—to see the men about the hole extracting you—it was like Esquimaux fishing.'

Philip was not only vastly offended, but he was also greatly shocked, at the conduct of the young Chicago lady, holding a conversation with him through the wall when he was in bed. To show his sense of the indelicacy of her course, he said nothing in return.

She tapped again.

'Well, Mr. Pennycomequick! have I scandalized you? We are in the land of freedom; and I am a daughter of the Stars and Stripes, and we American girls are not so particular about trifles as are your English misses. Are you very much bruised and crumpled?'

'Very,' groaned Philip.

'Do you good; take some of the starch out of you. You had the temerity to browbeat and insult me, when first you came to Andermatt. Now I have served you out, and I may tell you this to your consolation, that it is a lucky thing for you that you had your fall and contusions. But for that I would have turned you inside out, and twisted your silly head off your shoulders. I intended to do it, for no man offends me and escapes stings. I am content to leave you as you are, black and blue, and disjointed, like a wretch on the rack.'

She was stretching his mind on the rack and disjointing that as well, sitting, leaning against the wall, and working the mechanism.

'Mr. Pennycomequick, I heard about you from your wife before you arrived; how different you proved to the idea I had formed, you have too much conceit to imagine. I found a wooden man, with his limbs affixed to his trunk by pegs, with a wooden face, wooden ideas, wooden manners—and when this wooden figure-head had the audacity to insult me——'

Philip exclaimed, 'What I said was true. You yourself admitted its truth, when you told me your story.'

'My dear dolt!' said Miss Durham, 'I admit it. But who likes to have the truth skewered on a bayonet, and rammed down his throat? And now—what I say would splutter about like Japanese fireworks and do no one any harm, were it not that it is true, true in every word, and this it is that turns each word into duck-shot, with which I pepper you—through the wall.'

It was a wonder that next day Signora Lombardi did not find the sheets of No. 18 singed, so hot did Philip become between them with offended modesty, with anger, anguish, and shame.

'The game is up, so I do not mind showing you my hand,' cried Artemisia. She had folded her arms over her breast, and leaned back, with her head against the wall, and talked hastily, passionately. 'That little wife of yours, who is a thousand times too good for you, and whom I pity, yoked to such a fellow as yourself, she told me that it was not possible for you to come to love me, because she was your wife. Not, she hastened to explain, that she esteemed herself irresistible, and very superior, but because she had such a towering opinion of your rectitude, equal to your own of yourself. That was as much as daring me to attempt the conquest; and your own absurd self-esteem was another provocation. When you threw down the glove I accepted the challenge, and you know how in an hour or two I had spun you round like a teetotum.'

She stayed talking to laugh. As she laughed she shook the wall, and the wall rattled Philip's bed, and the rattling bed rattled his aching joints; but he felt these pains no more in the intensity of the agony of shame that he endured in his racked mind.

'You were quite fetching!' she continued. 'When you held out your hand and offered to be my stay, I was obliged to jump up. With all my powers of self-control I could hardly keep from boxing your ears and sending you into the lake for your impudence. However, I had no wish that the transformation scene should come off too soon. I intended to lead you on through other follies till I had ruined your reputation and your self-respect. But the fates have been against me; I cannot wait longer here. I abandon you to yourself and to your good little wife. I cannot waste time over you. I have other matters to attend to; better game to pursue than such a wooden leaping frog as you.' She stood up from her chair, and went to the window; it commanded a bleak prospect. She could not see the returning party on it. The girls Labarte had perhaps found the desired minerals and would not desist from collecting till they had each enough to form a *parure* of Tremoline.

Artemisia returned to her seat against the wall, and said, 'As for that romance I told you about myself, believe of it as much or as little as you please. When you tell your own story, with your autobiography, the little episode of Artemisia Durham will not be found in it. We only remember and write of our-

selves as we would like others to know us, not as we are. Is it not so?'

Then suddenly she broke into a song, a popular Viennese opera air, which she had turned into rough English verse to enable her to sing it at concerts elsewhere than in Germany. She had a beautiful, a naturally flexible voice, and every note was like an articulate crystal drop.

'A little grain of falsehood
Is found in all that's said,
It penetrates as leaven
Whatever's utterèd.
No man is what he seemeth.
No woman what appears.
There's falsehood oft in laughter,
And falsehood e'en in tears.
Both fact and fib together go
In everything we say or do.
To a peck of truth—a pinch of lie,
As the spice in the pudding, to qualify.'

CHAPTER L.

IN THE HOSPICE.

There is a toy, the delight of children, that consists in a manikin with his legs curled under him, weighted with lead in his globular nether parts. This manikin, however, persistently held down, or violently knocked over, always rights himself.

And there are human beings similarly constituted. With them self-conceit supplies the place of lead. There is no disturbing their equilibrium for more than a moment. Lay their heads in the dust, and the instant the finger that depressed them is removed, up go the heads again, nose in air. Strike them with horsewhip or poker, and they shiver in mute anger, unconscious of humiliation, and they are steady again, nose in air. Bore holes in them, and you cannot let out their ponderosity and disturb their equilibrium; set them on the fire, and you cannot melt the self-conceit out of them. It oozes out of their pores, it distils from their finger-tips, it streams out of their eyes, it pours from their lips, and yet never

exhausts itself, any more than the oil in the cruse of the widow of Sarepta. Kick them, and they travel upright, nose in air, along the carpet; pitch them out of the window, and they go down head uppermost; sink them in the deepest well, and they sit, slowly disintegrating at the bottom, head up.

Philip was not one of these. It was true that in him was a large amount of self-esteem—or what religious people would call self-righteousness, but it was not an organic inbred quality; it had been developed by his education, by the circumstances of his early life, and could therefore be expelled from his system by sharp medicine. By one of those exquisitely pitiful provisions of Nature, which compensates to the nightingale for his plainness by giving him a tuneful voice, and to the peacock for his harsh notes by surrounding him with a glory of gold and green, men of little acquirements, little minds, little presence, are furnished with the blessed gift of bumptiousness, which makes them unconscious of their insignificance, which induces those who can by no probability be heroes to others to be heroes to themselves. Just as the most ignorant men are the most positive, so are the most empty men the most self-contained. They can blow themselves out with the breath of their own nostrils.

Success in life is not necessary to make a man conceited, nor beauty to superinduce vanity in a woman. The extravagances of conceit are found in those men who have made a botch of life, and of vanity in those women who have least personal charms. Every disappointment, every rebuff, throws them in on themselves, and they seek in themselves that approval and appreciation which is denied them without. Like Narcissus, but lacking his excuse, they fall in love with themselves, because no one else will love them. Is it not possible that appreciation may be an element as necessary to the psychical as oxygen is necessary to the physical life, that when it is not freely given or wrested from the world without, we may set to work to engender it for ourselves within, just as in Jules Verne's romance those who voyaged ten thousand leagues under the sea, being out of the element that naturally fed the lungs, manufactured it for themselves under water?

Had Philip been constitutionally conceited, had bumptiousness been congenital, like scrofula in the blood, or tubercle in the brain, the overthrow he had met with at the hands of Miss Durham would not have seriously affected him, would have had no educative effect on him. He would have sighed and resigned himself to the conviction that Miss Durham was to be pitied, not he, because an inscrutable Providence, which denies to some eyes the faculty of seeing colour, and to some ears the power to distinguish and enjoy melodies, and to some noses the capacity to delight in odours, had denied to Miss Durham the ability to admire and adore him.

In the classic tale, Achilles was plunged by his mother Thetis in the waters

of Styx, which made him invulnerable, save in the heel by which she held him. So our good mother, Nature, takes some of her children, not the robust of brain and the Achillean in vigour and beauty, and renders them callous, so that they can pass through life unhurt by shaft of ridicule, scourge of rebuke, and flout of fortune. Every arrow glances off their skin, every blade used on them has its edge turned, every cudgel breaks without bruising. What happiness is theirs! They are whole and unhurt, whereas their richer endowed brothers are hacked, and pierced, and heart-broken.

The author had once to do with a worthy, pious man, put in a situation under him, who was triple-panoplied in the hide of self-esteem. As is usual with such persons, he was not much short of a fool, and did very foolish, inconsiderate things. When called to task for some egregious act, he bore the reprimand with meekness, then retired to his closet, where he prayed for him who had rebuked him, as for a persecutor. Never for one particle of a moment did it occur to him that he himself deserved blame. And the author knows full well that the callous-skinned who read these pages will feel no cut from his words, but draw up their heels under them, out of the way of his scythe.

It has been proved by experiment that the tortoise can live though deprived of its brains, but the tortoise is the animal with the hardest epidermis known. Perhaps the converse may be true, that those animals with the largest proportion of brain may have the most sensitive skins.

Now Philip was no fool. He had plenty of sound sense, but his moral faculties had been warped by the circumstances of his early career, and he had grown up with great suspicion of others, but sure confidence in himself. Now, suddenly, his eyes had been opened by a rude shock; his moral nature had been subjected to a *glissade* and a jolt almost as severe as that which his body had undergone, and as he was not tough and horny-hided in mind, he felt the results as acutely. If he ached with bruises and sprains in flesh and sinew, so did he ache with bruise and sprain in all the tissues and fibres of his inner spiritual self.

When Salome returned to Philip's room she found him disinclined to talk; he was still twitching and quivering from the lashes he had received, conscious only of his present pain, covered with humiliation. He had not been given time to think of his future conduct, even to consider the retrospect; the present torture occupied and made to tingle every nerve of his soul.

With the innate tact which Salome possessed, she saw at once that he did not wish to be disturbed; though she could not divine that he had other cause for suffering than his fall, or that other injuries had been done him than those which made his body black and blue. She knew that he was in pain, and that he sought to disguise the fact from her, and though full of solicitude for him, she did not harass him with attentions.

She drew a little stool beside his bed, and seated herself on it, with needlework for the baby, and did not look at him.

He lay on his back, but turned his head, and saw her beautiful auburn hair, with the evening sun tinging it with orange fire. For some time he looked at it without thought of her, only of himself, his shame, his jarred self-respect. That jest of Artemisia about the Esquimaux watching about a hole in the ice, to pull out of it a fish, was present to him; he saw the fish come up flapping its tail and tossing to escape the barb; and then thought of himself being hauled out of the hole in the snow through which he had plunged. Then he considered how that she—this malicious woman—had held him with a hook in his jaws and had played with him, and then how he had been suddenly plunged out of a world of light and smoothness into an abyss where all was darkness and horror. Where was he? Into what had he fallen? Had he not almost shot over the precipice, and gone down into the uttermost depths of degradation? What if this accident had not befallen him? What if that woman had gone on playing with him, and had lured him further, as in the folk-tales the nixies of the waterfalls lure shepherds to throw themselves over, with the vain belief that by so doing they will fall into the arms and be received into the realm of the water sprites?

His ideas became confused. At one moment he was a fish caught by a barb, then he was clinging to a rock, withdrawing from the enticements of a siren. The sun had set, or no longer crowned Salome with fire, she continued her needlework till dusk closed in rapidly and prevented her seeing her stitches. But she sat on, upon her little stool, resting her cheek against the bedclothes. Philip, half dreaming, had caught a lock of her hair and twisted it round his finger, and held it as if it were something that was so firm, so sure that if he clung to it, if he would retain it about his finger as a golden hoop, he could not continue his slide and fall, and so thinking, or fancying, in a confused condition of mind, bred of, or fostered by pain and shame, he had fallen asleep. Salome sat on, did not venture to move her head lest she should disturb his sleep by withdrawing her hair from his fingers.

Next morning Mrs. Sidebottom, Miss Durham, Mrs. Baynes, and the Labarte girls, together with the captain, departed for Andermatt, leaving Salome with her husband in the hospice. They did not leave without an altercation and a controversy between Mrs. Sidebottom and the hostess relative to the bill, in which both engaged with unmatched weapons, as Mrs. Sidebottom could speak no Italian, and Signora Lombardi no English. The former could not be brought to admit that the hostess was justified in charging somewhat higher for provisions, six thousand eight hundred feet above the sea, than in the valleys where wine is produced and calves are reared. Mrs. Sidebottom effected no greater reduction than a franc and a half, which she insisted on having expunged, as a charge for

a meal she protested she had not eaten. She then attempted to shift a couple of bottles of sparkling Asti from her account to that of Miss Durham, and to transfer sundry eggs for breakfast to the bill of Mrs. Baynes, who she was sure had ordered them, though she admitted having eaten them on the urgency of Janet. Eggs six thousand eight hundred feet above the sea are—well, eggs. Fowls at that elevation are sluggish layers, and eggs if brought up from the valleys run risks of being broken on the road. Mrs. Sidebottom, who resisted paying a penny apiece for them when charged to her, saw that there was reason for setting that value on them when they were in Mrs. Baynes's account. She fought desperately over the fish. There were lakes hard-by the hospice doors, and fish in lakes, easily procurable, therefore it was unreasonable that they should be charged fancy prices.

Mrs. Sidebottom achieved a great success in negotiating a bargain with a driver from Andermatt, whereby she and the captain were taken back by a returned carriage that had discharged its load at the hospice; she succeeded in securing the conveyance for half the ordinary price. Though she engaged the carriage for herself and her son, the captain did not return in it, but the three demoiselles Labarte. Janet and the captain, who had become inseparable, and who reacted on each other, he reviving her health, and she evoking life and wit out of his torpid nature, returned in a smaller trap behind the carriage of Mrs. Sidebottom. Miss Durham had made her own arrangements, and went off in a cabriolet by herself. She took an almost affectionate farewell of Salome, whom she really liked, though she despised her. Miss Durham was sure she had done Salome a good turn in the way in which she had brought Philip to his senses, and she accordingly patronized and petted his simple wife. She was pleased with herself for having contributed to the happiness of the young wife by making a fool of her husband, and then telling him what a fool he had been made.

Salome in her guilelessness reproached herself for having for a little while felt a suspicion of her husband and her friend, for having given way to a feeling of jealousy, for having been unhappy because Philip was so good and obliging as to make an effort to do what she had herself urged him to—make friends with the lonely American girl.

And Philip? In him self-reproach grew. It could grow now, for the soil was ready for it. Hitherto it was choked with the roots of pride and self-esteem. These had been torn up, and he was able now to appreciate himself justly and realize the preciousness of Salome.

Formerly he had looked upon himself as having done a grand and gracious act in taking her to him. An injustice had been committed—how he did not know—in some mysterious way, and he had stooped in the integrity of his soul to take up Salome, make her his wife, so as to indemnify her for her loss.

The suspicion he had entertained against his aunt relative to the will before the return of his uncle had been deepened since he had talked the matter over with Jeremiah. He had now very little doubt that Mrs. Sidebottom had succeeded in getting at the document unguardedly kept by Salome, and tearing away the signature. But though he was tolerably convinced that this fraudulent act had been committed by her, he had not till now considered that by this act his family was dishonoured, as was hers by the existence of Schofield. In what were the Pennycomequicks so much more virtuous than the Schofields? Earle Schofield, her father, was a swindler, and Louisa Sidebottom had committed an act that was felony.

And what was he, himself? He had wounded, driven from him with reproach and harshness the most innocent, single-hearted of women, who was faithful to him and to her duties in every fibre of mind, and body, and soul; whereas he, in a few hours, subjected to a slight temptation, had swerved from the path of right, had yielded to the fascination of the temptress, which he had not the moral strength to resist, and had been carried by her almost to the verge of committing a serious wrong.

The unworthiness of Schofield could be cancelled by the unworthiness of Mrs. Sidebottom. There was not much choice between them. But what was there to set in the account to balance his deviation in heart from his duty to Salome, the injustice and cruelty with which he had treated her at Mergatroyd?

Philip saw all this now clearly, and felt keen mortification and repentance. Salome was constantly with him; and he now, from his bed, and when he rose and walked leaning on her, had his eyes opened to see her many merits, to love the perfect purity and integrity of her soul. She was a child in heart, with the mind of a woman. She was not very clever, but she had common-sense. She was well but not highly educated, she had seen very little of the world, and this had necessarily given a narrow sweep to her powers; but her faculties were good, and with a widened range, her mind would rise to take an interest in all that was presented to her view. Hitherto he had liked Salome, appreciated her chiefly because she was a comfort to himself; now he loved her for her own sake.

Moreover, that little flare-up of jealousy in Salome's heart, a flare-up for which she accused herself before God on her knees—had transformed her regard for Philip into real love. The calm, lukewarm affection, sprung out of a sense of duty, had been changed by this spasm into ardent, passionate love.

That was a cold and colourless world—aloft on the summit of the St. Gothard Pass, and yet there the beautiful flowers of mutual love and trust between husband and wife came into blossom.

'Philip,' exclaimed Salome, coming into his room with a letter in her hand, 'is it not kind of dear Janet? Here is another sweet note from her, telling me how

darling baby is.'

'My dear, I know what a trial it is to you to be parted from him.'

'Oh, Philip—I am with you.' Then opening the letter and showing it him, 'Only fancy!—my father and Miss Durham have left the Impérial.'

'What—left Andermatt?'

'Yes.'

'Together?'

'I do not know; Janet does not say. And, Philip, she says you are to mind and get quickly well, for positively next week she and Lambert are to be married at the Embassy at Berne.'

CHAPTER LI.
AGAIN HYMEN.

Is there in all Europe a more delightful old-world town than Berne? There are grander minsters, there are more princely mansions, but there is no lovelier situation than that occupied by the dear old city perched on a rock round which the green Aar forms a loop. May the great cancer of modern Berne that lies in the west never creep over and destroy the beauty of the ancient town, as the same horrible fungus growth is disfiguring and killing the charm out of nearly every ancient city on the Continent. Even our common red-brick houses are better than the vulgar ash-gray, Jerusalem-artichoke coloured edifices, all staringly alike, and equally uninteresting, that are growing up in long line and regular square in imperial Aix, in patrician Nürnberg, in episcopal Spires, everywhere treading on and trampling out beauty. In a hundred years, probably, all the great towns of the Middle Ages will have been transmuted from gold to lead, and be utterly unattractive. When we see a ruin of a church, an abbey, a castle, an old manor-house, even of a straw-thatched cottage, we are sad, for we think what they were, beautiful in their several ways, and all having lost much by becoming ruins. But of these modern edifices everything we can say is that we live in hope that they may become ruins, for then only can they conceivably touch the picturesque. In England, our builders have grasped the truth that there is beauty in a broken skyline, and in alternation of light and shadow in a frontage; but on the Continent, in France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, no architect has risen above the idea of drawing parallel lines, and of making of every street an

elementary study in perspective.

On a brilliant summer day, when the sun was streaming down out of a perfectly-blue sky into the long main street of Berne, alive with marketers, three cabs drew up at the entrance to the Hotel of the Wild Man, near the Clock-tower, and from them stepped, in the first place, a young man in light-gray trousers and lavender gloves, and then a young and pretty lady wearing a bridal veil, a wedding-dress of silver gray. From the second carriage descended three bridesmaids—no other than the Labarte girls—and from the third cab Mrs. Sidebottom and Philip and Salome.

Captain Pennycomequick had been married at the Embassy to Janet Baynes, and if the day's weather gave a true presage of the new life entered on, that of the captain and his bride was likely to be a happy one. But there were surer grounds on which to base a forecast of their hymeneal condition than the state of the weather. The captain was an amiable man, whom nothing would rouse to opposition, and Janet, as he and his mother had ascertained, was very comfortably off. She had or would have about five hundred a year, and five hundred per annum in France, where they intended to live, would allow of their enjoying themselves as much as if they had double that sum in England, not necessarily because things were cheaper in France, but because popular opinion allowed retrenchment in a thousand of those trifles which in England are the great outlets that let money leak away.

There was to be no wedding-tour; not because Janet did not desire to escape with the captain from the rest of the party, but because the Labarte girls absolutely refused to be parted with. They had suddenly woke to the discovery that Mrs. Sidebottom had hoodwinked them, had carried them away out of sight and hearing whilst love-making was in progress; a veil had been torn from before their eyes, and they saw through all her dodges and subterfuges, and were in combined mutiny and angry protest. Henceforth nothing would sever them from their aunt. A great opportunity had been lost through the craft of that designing old woman, a passion on a grand scale had raged, so to speak, under their noses, and they had not sniffed it. Their attention had been drawn away, and they had been unable to make those interesting and instructive studies in the process of love-making to its grand climax in proposal, which might have been theirs and been to them of incalculable interest and advantage, but for that dreadful Sidebottom. Thus—if they could no longer take observations in the conduct of lovers, they could examine, and store up their observations on the conduct of newly-married people in the honeymoon. They clung to their aunt, with their arms about her neck, they lavished expressions of tenderness, they protested that they could not and would not be separated from her; and Janet foresaw that a wedding-tour encumbered with the Labarte girls would be worse

than none at all, or one with the Labarte girls plus Mrs. Sidebottom, and Salome and Philip to draw them off from her occasionally. As the party drove from the Embassy, Mrs. Sidebottom said to Philip:

'By the way, what do you think? Wonders will never cease. Did you see the entries in the marriage register previous to those made by Lamb and Janet?'

'I did not look.'

'*I* did; and whilst you were arranging about fees I made inquiries. There was a marriage at the Embassy this morning, before our affair. An unheard-of thing in Berne to have two English weddings the same day, so the chaplain said.'

'I dare say.'

'And guess who they were who entered the holy bonds.'

'I really cannot. I know none likely.'

'But you do know, and are quite able to guess.'

'I have not the energy, then.'

'Why, Colonel Yeo, that is to say, Earl Schofield and our friend at Andermatt, Miss Durham.'

'Nonsense!' Philip was startled.

'It is a fact. I suppose he really is an earl, for he was entered in the register as Earl Schofield, and not as Colonel Beaple Yeo.'

'But,' Philip stammered, 'it is not possible; he cannot.'

'He has. I saw the entries. They were married half an hour before we arrived.'

'I will inquire about it,' said Philip, 'as soon as ever the carriage stops. I will go back to the Embassy. Something must be done. He had no right to marry.'

'Why not?'

Philip did not answer. He was excited and uneasy.

'You cannot go till after the breakfast,' said Mrs. Sidebottom, 'and I suppose it is too late to forbid the banns. I presume he is really an earl. He says that the attainder is up. He truly is a distinguished-mannered man, and I like him. He looks a nobleman.'

In the evening the entire party visited the Schanzli, a garden or restaurant on a commanding hill above Berne, once occupied by a fort from which it takes its name. From the terrace is seen the range of the Oberland mountains, and, in the middle distance below, is the town viewed in its full length with towers and spires, and gabled roofs of chocolate-brown tile. Visitors are attended on by waitresses in the pretty costume of the canton.

The evening was lovely, a meet conclusion to so bright a day. The setting sun illumined the distant snows of the giants of the Oberland, and quivered in the windows of the city below. There are epoch-making scenes in life, scenes to which the memory recurs with unalloyed pleasure, scenes which have been

revelations of beauty or majesty to the soul, and such a scene is that from the Schanzli to the visitor who is there for the first time. It is a double revelation to him—the splendour of the glacier mountain world, and simultaneously with it a realization of the beauty, the charm of that old world of the Middle Ages which is being remorselessly and surely effaced, and on which in another century the men of that generation will be unable to look, or will know of it only a few scattered monuments, set in wastes of hideousness, and judge of it only as one might judge of the ocean by contemplating a few shells dug out of a chalk bed.

The party of Pennycomequick-Sidebottom-Labarte had settled itself to a marble-topped, or, to be more exact, imitation marble-topped table, and had ordered the waitress to bring the *carte* of wines and meats, when Claudine Labarte nudged her aunt, and whispered:

'See! see! There they are, M. le Comte de Schoville and our dear Artemise. Shall we go to them?'

'On no account,' said Mrs. Penycombe-Quick, that is to say Janet, hastily. 'Besides,' she looked in the same direction, 'they do not seem to desire our interference.'

All looked at the little table, not far distant, where sat Beaple Yeo, alias Schofield, and his bride. The same day that had smiled on Lambert and Janet had laughed over them, but without sure augury of calm weather apparently; for already a post-nuptial storm had broken loose. Beaple Yeo was leaning back in his green-painted iron chair, very red and blotched in face, and opposite him was Artemisia whom he had just made his wife, flushed and talking rapidly.

It was clear that they were in angry altercation—about what could not be learned—for their voices were drowned by the music from the little theatre in the grounds, in which the overture to Boildieu's 'Jean de Paris' was being performed.

Beaple Yeo curled his whisker round his forefinger, and said something in reply to a discharge of angry words from Artemisia; whatever it was that he said, it so stung her that, losing all self-control, she sprang to her feet, leaned across the table, and struck him on the cheek. Beaple lost his equilibrium, and went over with his chair on the gravel of the terrace, to the great amusement of the Swiss waitress, and of the scattered visitors at the tables, who had noticed the altercation. Artemisia was startled at her own violence, and ashamed; she looked round, and caught sight of the friends she had made at Andermatt. Her colour was so heightened with passion that it could not become deeper with shame. Instead of resuming her seat, without regarding the humiliated man who was picking himself up from the ground, she came directly to the table where the party of Pennycomequick-Sidebottom was seated, and with heaving bosom and flashing eye, she stood before Philip, and said in a tone broken with excitement: 'You have helped to deceive me. It was mean—it was cruel! You insulted me first

of all, and then you conspired with this—this man to play me a base trick. It was unworthy of a gentleman, of an Englishman.'

'I beg your pardon,' said Philip; 'I do not understand of what you are speaking. I am quite unaware that I ever deceived you.'

'You told me he was a nobleman—an earl—and he is nothing of the kind.'

'I never said he was.'

'I asked you, and you answered me that he was an earl.'

'I did no such thing. You misunderstood me. You asked me whether he had any right to the title of Earl of Schofield, and I answered—I recall exactly my words—that he was perfectly justified in calling himself Earle Schofield. That is his name. Whether he has any right to call himself Beaple Yeo, and to claim to be a colonel, is another matter on which I entertain grave doubts; but I have none whatever that his surname is Schofield, and that his Christian name is Earle.'

Artemisia did not speak for a minute, she was very angry and ashamed. When she had in some measure recovered her self-possession, she said bitterly: 'You might have been more explicit.'

'I refused to say much about the man. I had my reasons. Moreover, I had no idea that the matter was one of importance to you.'

'I have sold myself to him. I have married him this day, and only now have discovered that I have been basely imposed upon.'

'It is I—I who have been taken in,' shouted Yeo, coming forward, pushing to the table, regardless of the shrinking fear that appeared in the faces of Salome and Janet. 'It is I,' he repeated, 'I that have been deceived. I was led to believe you were a wealthy American, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars—and—and I want to know where is the money? You are an adventuress.'

'And you are an adventurer,' laughed Artemisia. 'Perhaps we have taken each other in, and we are both fools to have been so easily deceived. Who told you I was a rich American heiress?'

'The waiter at the Imperial.'

'And he told me you were a rich milord.'

'I want to know what you really are,' said Yeo, who was also very angry—angry and disappointed. 'I have a right to know who or what manner of person I have married.'

'And I,' said Artemisia, 'I also want to know who and what manner of person I have married.'

'That, perhaps, I can tell you,' said Philip gravely. 'But not in the presence of these ladies. Mr. Schofield, or whatever you call yourself, I will trouble you to return to your table, or reseat yourself where you were. I see the waitress is in alarm lest she should lose payment for what you ordered and have consumed.'

Beaple Yeo sulkily went back to his place. Philip with a sign, showed

Artemisia that he desired her to follow. She obeyed. When they were beyond earshot of Mrs. Sidebottom, Salome, and the rest, Philip said, standing by the little table, 'Mr. Schofield, I also wish to ask of you a question.'

'I am ready, my dear boy, to be put through my catechism,' answered Yeo, with recovered assurance. 'If you want the pedigree of Schofield, I have it at my fingers' ends.'

'It is not the pedigree so much as the alliances of Earle Schofield that interest me,' said Philip.

'Oh, the Schofields have been allied with the best blood in the land, better than your twopenny-ha'penny manufacturers.'

'I must ask you to tell me whether, before you married Miss Durham at the Embassy to-day, you had ascertained that an alliance—not a very high one—was at an end.'

'What do you mean?' asked Yeo, with his face slightly changing colour.

'You may happen to remember Ann Dewis, the coal-barge woman, whom you married at Hull some sixteen years ago?'

Beaple uttered a low oath.

'I have reason to know,' continued Philip, 'that she is alive—and you know that she is so, as well as I do. Miss Durham, this fellow had no right to marry you. His legitimate wife is still alive; no countess, but a vulgar old woman who owns and works a coal-barge on the Keld-dale Canal. He has a son by her. One good turn deserves another, and as you did me a real kindness at the hospice I repay it by freeing you from a degrading union just contracted with this wretched man, who is a mere adventurer and swindler. And now, one word with you, Schofield. The evidence of your bigamy is at hand. Take care that you never show your face at Mergatroyd to annoy me or my wife, or that you trouble Janet—if you do I shall have you immediately arrested on a charge of felony, for what you have done to-day.'

CHAPTER LII.
THE DEVIL'S KNELL.

In Carisbrooke Castle is a deep well, three hundred feet in depth, and, in order to draw the water, there is contrived a great wooden drum or wheel, which, when turned, draws up the bucket. Within the wheel stands a donkey, and it turns

it by stepping on as if walking, although, in fact, the animal never advances an inch, for, as it moves, the wheel revolves under its feet. One ass was known to perform this task for fifty years, and another for forty years. There is, unless we guard against it, a tendency in ourselves to fall into the same routine—tramping, tramping on, over the same ground, in the same unambitious manner, neither advancing in our course, nor varying our horizon.

The acquaintance with Miss Durham had wrought much good in Salome as well as in Philip. She had opened his eyes to see his ignorance of himself, and hers to her ignorance of the world. Salome's previous existence had been within a narrow sphere. Shut off by peculiar circumstances from forming many acquaintances and having many friends, with her horizon contracted almost within the walls of the dingy and ugly red-brick house occupied by the Pennycomequicks, uncle and nephew, there can be no doubt but that she would in time have settled into a condition little superior to that of the Carisbrooke ass. Her mind would have trotted round and round in the same drum, and have accommodated itself without a murmur or a thought of resistance to it. In the course of years she would have become almost as ordinary, as petty-minded as the deceased Mrs. Cusworth. But contact with Miss Durham had startled her out of this intellectual donkeydom. She saw in the American girl a vivacity of interest, a breadth of view, a sparkle of intelligence, a receptivity for novel ideas, and a knowledge of the world and of the things in the world—the currents that circulated in it, the forces that propelled its waves and directed its tides, to which she had been completely strange. And this stimulated in her the desire to know. An American gentleman once said to the writer, 'We have no prejudices, therefore we are always learning.' That is the secret of American success in every branch of activity. Self-conceit breeds pig-headedness, which raises mountains of prejudice in our way, preventing us from seeing, as the Germans have it, that there are men beyond these mountains. Salome had noticed that Miss Durham was able at once, and without effort, to arrest the interest and enchain the attention of Philip, and this she attributed to the possession of qualities in the Chicago girl which were dormant, if not non-existent, in herself. She had the shrewdness to perceive, and the good sense to acknowledge, her own ignorance and inability to take part in conversation when it turned on politics, natural history, on music, art, or social questions of the day. She could talk about recipes for tapioca and semolina puddings, what proportion of water should be put with milk for a baby, the delinquencies of servants, the sermons she heard, the hymns she sang in church, the cutting-out and style of a dress, but not on much beyond. Being humble-minded, she was ready to take to heart what she recognised, and she studied Miss Durham with attention, to ascertain the points in which she was accomplished above her own acquirements.

When ale in bottle turns flat, housewives put in a raisin, and this at once restores the effervescence. A prudent spouse should have a reserve of raisins ever by her to pop into her husband's spirits whenever they are down. Some wives, however, act on the reverse principle, and perforate the corks, or knock off the necks of all the sparkling liquors in the cellars of their husbands' hearts. They cannot endure to see their good men cheery, sanguine, interested, hopeful; they reduce them all to the state of lymph and insipidity. Such wives when they find their husbands strung to concert pitch play the domestic accompaniment a semitone lower, so that the daily music of the household is a discord. They take the edge off their husband's wit with a sneer, overshadow his spirits when they sparkle, lash him to anger when he is pleased, and goad and spur him to madness when they find him jaded and desirous of repose. By a native perversity they seek to be always at cross purposes with their husbands, and then grumble because their victims do not smile and sing on the bed of nettles they have strewn for them.

But Salome was not one who could degenerate into such a mar-peace as this. In her lowly mind she acknowledged her deficiencies, and as she was endowed with energy and with excellent abilities, she determined to remedy these shortcomings in herself, and had the capacity to accomplish what she resolved.

The forethought of Jeremiah Pennycomequick came to her aid opportunely. He also, by his holiday of two years, had been thrown out of his drum, and had found that there was another and a brighter world than that of the tread-mill. He had discovered, late in life, that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, and not a dull boy only, but a cantankerous one.

Man is a lantern, and the vivid intellect within is the light; by nature he is a lantern with many sides, through all of which the interior light streams, irradiating and bringing into prominence a thousand surrounding objects. But the pressure of modern life forces him to blacken over one after another of these sides, and to line each with a reflector, so as to focus the light, and cast it through a single lens. The stress of competition, the strain of the social struggle, combine to make of each man a bull's-eye lantern. It is true that the light so concentrated illumines such objects as fall within the radius of the beam with superior brilliancy, but it leaves everything else in more profound darkness. What is gained in intensity is lost in the periphery. Jeremiah had discovered this, and more than this. He had learned by his own weakness to take a more kindly interest in others, to be pitiful towards their infirmities, patient with their mistakes and even follies.

Having himself tottered irresolute on the edge of the commission of an extreme act of folly, from which he had been rescued solely by a providential intervention, he was able to make allowances for lack of judgment or weakness

of resolve in others.

Jeremiah saw that Philip had quarrelled with Salome, and, without inquiring into the occasion, he understood sufficient of their several characters to see that the best possible means he could adopt for reconciling the difference was to give them a holiday together abroad—to let them travel on the Continent for some time, and mutually learn much of which both were ignorant. He accordingly wrote to Philip not to return to Mergatroyd till Christmas. He wished, so he said, himself to spend some months at the mill in recovering the threads of the business which had fallen from his fingers, and to settle thoroughly down again into the old groove of life.

This enabled Philip, who was liberally supplied with money, to visit Paris, Rome, Milan, Venice, and return to England by the Rhine. He and Salome made travelling acquaintances, some agreeable, all instructive; they saw France staggering after its humiliation, and Germany ruffling in its pride of victory; they shared small adventures, and equally small jokes such as spring up on all travel, and are as poor to preserve as the flowers gathered. They saw together picture-galleries, heard together operas, and together acquired a fund of experience of life in many aspects unattainable at Mergatroyd. The tour was, as Jeremiah designed, educative to both, and it broadened and deepened their mutual sympathies. It did more: it bound them together as chums in the same school, where both read out of the same books and summed on the same slate, and wrote out the same moral sentences in their copybooks. As they learned together, they assisted each other; what escaped the eye of one was perceived by the other, and each took delight in drawing the attention of the other to what he or she observed.

They laid up together a fund of pleasant recollections to which to revert when holiday was over and work began; a shifting diorama of scenes and incidents and personages that would transform and beautify the interior of the drum when they were recalled to the obligation of treading it.

But not so only. When they returned to work, it would be to hope and scheme for such another excursion together in the future, though perhaps they could hardly look for another of the same duration. The retrospect would enrich, and the prospect stimulate, and banish tedium and the sense of drudgery from their life and work at smoky Mergatroyd.

What veins of interest had, moreover, been opened to both—flowers, scenery, pictures, music, antiquities, social customs, political institutions, European history past and that making under their eyes, such were no longer dead words but living interests, germs of thought, studies to be pursued at home in the intervals of work, in relaxations from task, by the aid of books and papers, and in common.

As mention has been made of the saying of an American, the writer ven-

tures to quote another—the remark made to him by a Belgian. 'I perceive that when a Flemish shopkeeper has realized a little money over the necessities of life, he says to himself, "Now I will buy a picture!" The German under the same circumstances says, "Now my son shall learn another language!" The American says, "Now I will see the world!" The Englishman says, "Now I will have salmon, though it is four shillings a pound." They fill their minds—your man his stomach.'

There have been found toads embedded in stone, which are supposed to have occupied the same situation for even six thousand years. For six thousand years their minds have never travelled beyond the cavity in which, enveloped in obscurity, they have squatted; and men will allow themselves to settle down into holes exactly fitting them, in which they will sit out the span of their allotted days in self-complacency, without an idea beyond it, an ambition outside it.

Indeed, we live upon a Goodwin Sand, that is ready to engulf us, to suck us down and embed us in its heart, unless we bestir ourselves and resist the downward suction.

Let the reader look around him and see how many of those he knows are embedded in their holes as toads, able only to talk about their holes, to be touched by nothing which does not affect their holes, are unconcerned about everything save the texture of the stone that encloses them, and the slime that drapes the walls of their hole.

We do not say that the only means of escape from such bondage and mental stultification is Continental travel; there are a hundred ways of escape from petrifaction, if only we will use them, and use them persistently. In the case under consideration it happened to be the way, and the most effective way, in which both Philip and Salome escaped from the holes into which they were about to sink and become sealed up.

But there is one way in which the overplus of money will never help to deliver us from petrifaction, and that is, by putting it into our stomachs in the shape of salmon at four shillings a pound.

We remember the case of a very short-sighted man, who had been short-sighted from infancy. He never wore glasses till he was aged about five-and-twenty, and then suddenly found himself launched into a new world, and able to see and take a lively interest in things which had been hidden from him hitherto. We are all, through life, if we do not voluntarily become like the toad-hole dwellers, being introduced into new worlds, whether by the acquisition of a picture like the Fleming, or by learning a new language, like the German, or by travel, as the Yankee. Philip and Salome had put on their glasses simultaneously, and it quickened their affection for each other to be engaged on the same effort, and to be together in the acquisition of wisdom and knowledge and experience. Besides this intellectual and moral bond they had another—certainly at the time

not very intellectual, but a very fast and dear one—the little Philip, who travelled with them wherever they went, and who wound himself about both their hearts, and in doing so blended both in one. It was early in life for the child to begin his travels, but travelling did not hurt him. He throve on it. Before he said 'Pa,' or 'Ma,' he articulated the syllable 'Go.' As Philip the Greater said, an augury of the young man's future, as one of action.

At length Philip and Salome were home; and once again Salome flew to the arms of the dear white-haired old man, whose face had lost all its hardness and had acquired a new expression of sweetness. And Jeremiah was able to receive her loving embrace, and to hold her to his breast without shrinking, without a tremor. The storm had passed and the St. Luke's summer had set in on his end of life, to be cheered not only by the presence of Salome, but also by that of Philip the Little, who, it was clear, would become the pet and idol of old Jeremiah, even more than he was the pet and idol of his father and mother.

Late at night, in the nursery, at the nursery window on Christmas Eve, when Philip the Great, and Philip the Little, and Salome were returned to Mergatroyd, husband and wife stood, looking out into the star-besprent wintry sky. Salome had her arms round Philip's waist, and he had his thrown over her shoulder, drawing her to his side, and she rested her golden head on his breast. The only light in the room came from the fire; the only sound for some time was the breathing of the child in its cradle.

Both were happy, and occupied with their own thoughts.

At length Philip broke the silence, and said:

'It is very, very good of Uncle Jeremiah; he has taken me into full partnership, and what is more, he proposes that he should winter abroad and return in spring to allow of our then taking a holiday together.'

'And what is he going to do about Mrs. Sidebottom?'

'I cannot say. He is himself undecided. He says that as he laid the trap into which she fell, he must not be too hard with her. He will see her himself. He goes after the new year to France when he will visit her and make some arrangement. He says, but hardly can mean what he says, that it is a law of nature that persons pinched in circumstances and pressed for money lose their scruples, as crabs cast their claws, and lizards drop their tails when nipped or pursued. It is a law of nature and must be allowed for.'

Philip felt a shudder of protest against his side, but Salome said nothing.

All at once she started. 'Oh, Philip! What is that?'

A sound issued from the cradle. She ran to it, stooped and looked at her baby. The flashes of the firelight were reflected from the ceiling on the little face.

'Hark! oh, hark, Philip! Baby is laughing—laughing aloud in his sleep. He has never done that before. It is from very joy at being home—at his own dear

home again.'

'What, Salome?—after Paris and Rome, the Alps, and the Rhine, poor old dirty, dingy Mergatroyd is dear?'

'To be sure it is, Philip—how can it be otherwise? And oh, Philip, how kind the people are! How pleased they all seem to see us back again. I thought—I really thought they would have shaken my hand off, and that old Fanshawe, the night-watch, would have kissed me, Philip. There may be more light-hearted, more picturesque, more romantic people in other lands, but there can be nowhere, not throughout the world, more true, warm-hearted, sterling folk, than our dear Yorkshire people. Do you not love them, Philip?'

'I have given Yorkshire the best proof of my attachment in taking to me a wife from thence.'

'Oh, Philip!'

Salome nestled to his side again by the window, and with him again looked forth silently into the night sky.

After a long pause Philip said, 'Hark!'

Through the still night air could be heard the church bell.

Three.

Three.

Three.

'Some man is dead,' said Philip. 'How strange!—at midnight.'

Then he counted the strokes that denote the age. He counted to one hundred.

'One hundred!' exclaimed Philip. 'How extraordinary! How can that be?'

'Philip,' said Salome, laughing, 'do you not know? It is the Devil's Knell.'

'The Devil's Knell?'

'Yes, at midnight on Christmas Eve, the sexton here and in other Yorkshire towns tolls the knell. The Devil is dead. Christ is born.'

After a moment's thought, Philip said gravely, 'Yes—the Devil is dead, that is to say, the old evil principle in me—my former self-assurance, pride and mistrust—it is dead. But, Salome, I ought to tell you that there was a time, and not so long ago when I——'

She put her hand over his mouth.

'The Devil is dead,' she said; 'I want to hear nothing of his last sickness. But, Philip, you ought to know that I was—at Andermatt—very foolish, very jeal——'

He stopped her with a kiss.

'Salome, you were never foolish: you were always an angel.'

'Well,' she said, 'we will not talk of the past: we will set our faces to the future. The Devil is dead.'

END OF VOL. III.

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