

emperors had proved a hugh attraction, and the crowd pressed upon their footsteps with true British curiosity. We were amusing ourselves watching them through the marvelous Alhambra Court, and noting the cautious sidelong faces by which they avoided trespass on the weird Kufic characters of the marble floor—the characters that form the awful Name—when suddenly the arm on mine trembled, and there was a quick low whisper in my ear.

“There are aunt and uncle, by the fountain of the Lions. Do tell Mr. Lockyer; he might like to see them!”

Although she spoke earnestly enough there was a certain merriment in her tone that barbed the jest, and was too *piquant* to pass unacknowledged. So I answered,

“No doubt. Lockyer indeed promised to present me to Mr. Leadenhall on opportunity, so I think if you will trust yourself under Nelly’s shadow for a minute or two I’ll ask him to come and do it.”

Fred himself had now taken the alarm, and was glad of my excuse to disengage himself. “The old megatherum, sure enough” he murmured deprecatingly; “must clear, Harry my boy;” which indeed he did very precipitately, and merely raising his hat in farewell.

And not a moment too soon if he had good reason to avoid the old people. For the lady having caught sight of her niece was already bearing down to recapture her. Neither she nor her husband deserved any of the uncomplimentary epithets which I had so recently heard showered on them. On the contrary they were a fresh buxom comely couple, not ill-dressed or ill-mannered, and with the vivacity and apparent good-humour so attractive in people of their age. I began to suspect Master Fred of more than impudence, and to construe his retreat into a confession very little creditable.

It was a day of novel acquaintanceship and this last was cemented by a dinner. The Mincing Lane magnate was quite a Lucullus in his way, and Messrs. Bertram and Roberts *can* cook. The old gentleman was giving some very elaborate injunctions regarding a peculiar white hermitage, and his wife discussing effects of millinery with her ward, when Nelly managed to whisper,

“They want so much to have half-an-hour together, Harry. Can’t you manage it for them before we go? Think, there’s a dear.”

“Who want half-an-hour, and where do they want it?” I asked not unnaturally. “And how can I manage anything if you won’t let me manage my dinner? I don’t know what on earth you are making *moves* about, and I believe you’ve had too much Moselle.”

But she would’nt be put off, and, before we had risen, had insisted on my comprehension. And I was pledged to do what I could for them, without in the least knowing how or what, and my evening was consequently miserable and myself a discontented martyr.