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sullen reverberation had died down to silence.

"Yes," said General Meyer, whose glasses were still focused on the funeral sleigh, "they seem to have pulled up."

"They probably think that the avalanche is the unaided work of nature," said Saunders, "and one avalanche has a knack of starting others. If they are wise they will turn back."

"They are not wise," said the Commander-in-Chief, "they are going forward again."

"They cannot possibly get round," said Saunders. "A sleigh and four horses cannot make progress through soft snow six feet deep. Neither can they cut their way through the shlag-lawine. When the avalanche ceases to descend, the snow is forced together to the consistency of ice. That great lawine, which lies across the track like a stranded monster, is as hard as a granite wall, and will continue to block the King's highway till the warm winds of May underline its glassy ramparts."

The black sleigh with its three occupants and four sable steeds continued to advance till it reached the base of the obstructing snow. At this point the Arch-duke and his companions were almost immediately beneath Saunders' party, and the latter saw quite plainly the red-bearded nobleman get out of his conveyance and examine the mighty mass of compressed snow that blocked his progress. They saw him gaze up at its towering bulk, survey its overlapping sides, and finally, in a burst of impotent wrath, strike its iron flanks with a stick.

"What will he do now?" mused Meyer.

"There is only one thing he can do," replied Saunders, "come back."

"And we are to wait for him here?" asked Meyer, not without a touch of anxiety.

"Best not," said Saunders, suppressing a smile. "Cyril's temper will be superlatively atrocious, and as we cannot well risk firing at him, there is reason why he should have the opportunity of potting you—or me, for that matter—in a vital part. Adolf, home, please."

CHAPTER XXI.

Woman's Rights.

AT the conclusion of the royal funeral service the Perownes took their exit by the south transept and made their way back to their hotel on foot. Neither spoke, both appearing strangely preoccupied. When they were back in their sitting-room, Phoebe at length found her tongue.

"I wonder," she said, "why our tickets were signed by Fritz of Friedrichsheim."

"And I wonder," replied her mother, "why the matter should seem to you of any importance."

"It is a fine name," mused Phoebe. "I love the sound of it. No one could be mean or false or cowardly with a name like that. And it is always cropping up at unexpected moments. It rang out in the 'Persian Vaults' like a trumpet call when Mr. Saunders needed succour. It is on those tickets—"

"There is nothing particularly strange about that," interrupted Mrs. Perowne, in matter-of-fact tones. "Doubtless the Baron, as an important noble, had the right to be present at the ceremony. Possibly, finding himself unable to attend from some cause or other, he passed them on to his friend Mr. Saunders to dispose of as he thought fit."

"Then we should write and thank one, or both of them."

"I think we should," agreed the mother.

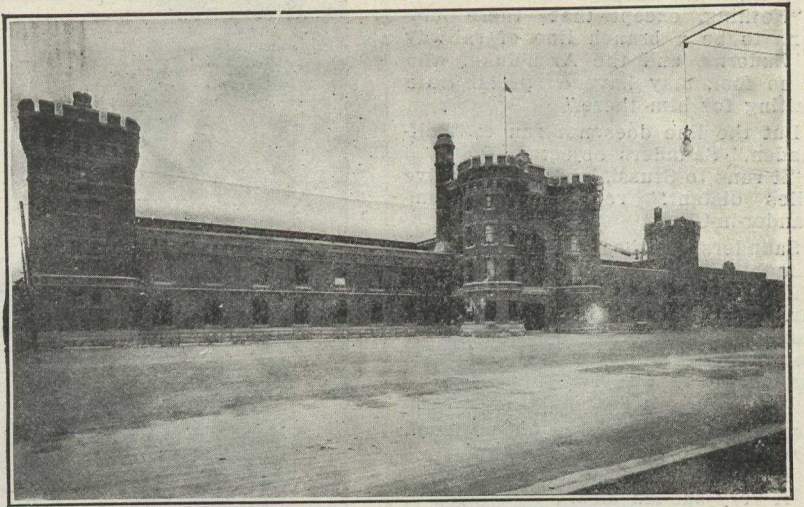
"I wonder what he is like," pursued Phoebe, after a brief pause.

Mrs. Perowne shifted a little uneasily on her chair. "Very handsome, I believe," she said nonchalantly.

"That tells us nothing," said Phoebe. "Is he big and strong and virile like Mr. Saunders, only in a more youthful and romantic mould? Or is he elegant and graceful like Herr Lugner, with the addition of a manlier, more robust atmosphere?"

"I haven't the least idea," said Mrs. Perowne, yawning.

"Neither have I, but I am desper-



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