

"I beg to ask your pardon, a thousand pardons for addressing you in French. I have been so long accustomed to speak only French, and having but since a day or two returned to England, that I forget myself à chaque instant. I fear I am in your way? Shall I retire?"

"By no means. I will not disturb you for a moment. I am in search of a—a small parcel—which I mislaid yesterday."

As he spoke, his eyes fell on the "parcel." It was on the corner of the mantelpiece. At the same moment some vehicle came rattling down the street, turned round, and drew up at the door.

He took a step to the other window and looked from it. Not the one she was at. It was, as he expected, his own cab: the fashionable vehicle with young men at that day. He had walked from the chambers of a barrister close by, where he had been lounging away an hour, and had ordered his groom to follow him. With an elaborate bow (and certainly a very respectful one) to the lady, he quitted her presence, descended the staircase, and departed by the front door.

Again Sophia peeped from the window. She saw him open the "parcel," light a cigar, puff away at it, and step into the cab, which bore the Lyvett crest. The groom sprang to his place behind, and the smoke went puffing up the street. She had been at no loss to know him after the first moment. It was, in fact, young Mr. Lyvett.

"I wonder who she is, and what she does there?" thought he as he drove onwards. "Don't much think my father would like—"

The cab stopped. He pulled up the horse so suddenly that its head and fore-legs were jerked into the air. Mr. May and his sister-in-law were just passing down the pavement, arm-in-arm.

"Hallo, May! Here."

Mr. May touched his hat, and leaving Miss Foxaby on the pavement, approached the cab, and touched his hat again.

"May! who the deuce is that, down yonder?"

"Sir?" cried Mr. May.

"Who's that lady in my father's private room?"