

## Chapter Twenty-two

by the perturbed watchman. Presently I heard my companion utter a sigh so profound that it was a whispered moan.

"What is it?" I murmured.

"Oh, it's the thought of Quesnay and to-morrow; facing them with *this!*" she quavered. "Louise has written a letter for me to give them, but I'll have to tell them——"

"Not alone," I whispered. "I'll be there when you come down from your room in the morning."

We were embarked upon a singular adventure, not unattended by a certain danger; we were tingling with a hundred apprehensions, occupied with the vital necessity of drawing the little spy after us—and that was a strange moment for a man (and an elderly painter-man of no mark, at that!) to hear himself called what I was called then, in a tremulous whisper close to my ear. Of course she has denied it since; nevertheless, she said it—twice, for I pretended not to hear her the first time. I made no answer, for something in the word she called me, and in her seeming to mean it, made me choke up so that I could not even whisper; but I made up my mind that, after *that*, if this girl saw Mr. Earl