

interest can the Colonial trade have for you? Indigo is'nt in your line who are never in the blues, and—"

"For mercy sake spare me such jests, and I'll in preference expound. I've no appointment with Leadenhall who is a Cayman. But he has a niece, and—and—"

"And you have with her, eh?"

"Well, perhaps. At any rate I knew she would be here. But I have'nt seen her yet, though I did catch a glimpse of the old people. There's a female mastodon you know, worse than he is. They were groping together among the tombs and brasses of the Mediæval Court like a pair of ghouls. So I fled, and you found me."

Lockyer was a man who especially disliked any exposition of his private affairs. From his manner rather than his words I derived the impression that he was there in prosecution of some forbidden flirtation, and in great terror of interference by the higher powers. I asked him how he meant to find and to approach the lady.

"I must take my chance in the crowd, I suppose," he answered. "There's a fete this evening; a couple of Timbuctoo or Ashantee emperors are improving their minds with the Screen of the Kings, and there's opera and fountains and fireworks and all the rest of it by-and-bye. I'll make an opportunity, depend upon it."

The partagas were finished, and I turned within to present him to Nelly. We were making our way up the transept and round the grand organ when he pinched me hard and whispered,

"There she is, there! But who's that with her I wonder? There, by the second table! Dont you see, in the blue silk and black lace shawl! Turned this way, talking to the little woman in the velvet jacket and jockey hat! I think I might venture. The small person dont look ferocious. Here goes!"

"I'm flattered to hear you pay my wife so high a compliment. But the blue dress and lace shaw; why that's Charley! Fred, you dont mean to say it's Miss Fenchurch you are philandering after? I did not give you credit for half the pluck, old fellow, but if Barkis is willin'—"

"Charley, Barkis!" repeated Lockyer in unfeigned amazement. "I dont know about my pluck, Haywood, but I do about your impudence. But if that lady is Mrs. H., I'll forgive you, and make my own peace with her."

And although he devoted himself dutifully to Eleanor, while Miss Fenchurch made herself more than agreeable to Eleanor's husband, it required but small penetration to read the signs of the intelligence between them. I rather think they both felt grateful for the protection of the convoy that absolved them from social misgiving, and our little party was sufficiently merry for the best part of the afternoon. The