

goal were even now reached, and we might be happy. Reassure thyself, *mon beau*. It is necessary. One does not make an omelette without breaking eggs. This girl, then, is a new obstacle; thou art assured of it?"

"Not yet; but the bare suspicion unmans me."

"Yes, I see it all," continued the girl: "Thou art brave against men, but a woman's face daunts thee. It shall not *me*, however. This shall be my affair. Leave it with me."

"No Marie! Not *thou* too," said Delaval; "at least not *yet*; we must know more."

"Well, go. Convince thyself. Are there not papers—letters to be found in their baggage? Go and search. I, on my side, will watch and wile out the truth of her story."

"And then, should it be so, Marie ——?"

"Ah! then—see!" and she seized an alabaster vase from the mantel, and with one clasp it lay shivered like an egg-shell in her gripe.

"That hand is small, but it is determined!" said she, in a sharp, roughly-aspirated whisper.

In pursuance of the hint just thrown out by his sister, Delaval resolved to start forthwith on his quest for the proofs of Madeline's identity. On her side, Marie invented a plea accounting for his absence at the dinner-table.

Before he set off for the hotel, the Frenchman ordered a man to follow him with the spring-cart.

Six good miles had to be gone over; yet half an hour had barely elapsed before he leaped from his saddle at his destination, and gave his smoking beast into the charge of an hostler.

Few words served to convey to the landlord his errand. The Harveys had been induced to stay over night at the hall; might, indeed, prolong their visit for a few days, and were, therefore, in want of a few necessaries which his man was coming over to fetch. He, himself, was tired and hungry. Would his host toss him up something hot? and meanwhile, would he join him in a bottle of wine? and to prevent disturbance they might as well go up to his friend's room.

Charmed at his new guest's complaisance, the canny Scot who managed the concern hastened to give the necessary directions, and then showed the way to the apartment in question.