

bread, and new cheese crowned the scene, and during the evening came a band of singers, the young people of the Community, and sang for us the song of the Lorelei, accompanied by home-made violins and flageolets. At length we were left alone, the candle had burned out, the house door was barred, and the peaceful Community was asleep; still we two sat together with our feet upon the hearth, looking down into the glowing coals.

‘Ich weisz nicht was soll es bedeuten
Dasz ich so traurig bin,’

I said, repeating the opening lines of the Lorelei; ‘I feel absolutely blue to-night.’

‘The memory of the sulphur-woman,’ suggested Ermine.

‘Sulphur-woman! What a name!’

‘Entirely appropriate, in my opinion.’

‘Poor thing! How she longed with a great longing for the finery of her youth in Sandy.’

‘I suppose from those barbarous pictures that she was originally in the flesh,’ mused Ermine; ‘at present she is but a bony outline.’

‘Such as she is, however, she has had her romance,’ I answered. ‘She is quite sure that there was one to love her; then let come what may, she has had her day.’

‘Misquoting Tennyson on such a subject!’ said Ermine, with disdain.

‘A man’s a man for all that and a woman’s a woman too,’ I retorted. ‘You are blind, cousin, blinded with pride. That woman has had her tragedy, as real and bitter as any that can come to us.’

‘What have you to say for the poor man, then?’ exclaimed Ermine, rousing to the contest. ‘If there is a tragedy at the sulphur-house, it belongs to the sulphur-man, not to the sulphur-woman.’

‘He is not a sulphur-man, he is a coal-man; keep to your bearings, Ermine.’

‘I tell you,’ pursued my cousin, earnestly, ‘that I pitied that unknown man with inward tears all the while I sat by that trap-door. Depend upon it, he had his dream, his ideal; and this country girl with her great eyes and wealth of hair represented the beautiful to his hungry soul. He gave his whole