

was not as contemptuous of his apparent lack of physical courage as she might have been, and she despised herself because her contempt was not greater. The young stranger had carried himself so complacently in the difficult and trying scene to which he had been subjected. His sang-froid had not been ruffled, his air of delicate self-sufficiency and dainty mockery had been scarcely touched by the coarse insults with which he had been so cruelly assailed. She despised herself, because it seemed to her that his youth had escaped her deeper condemnation solely by reason of his exceptional comeliness. In this she was wrong, for the stranger had avoided her full displeasure, not because he was a very handsome man, and she herself a foolish girl, but because she had to a certain extent fallen under the magnetism that Fritz of Friedrichsheim exercised over most people, irrespective of sex and age.

"What do you want to do this morning, Phoebe?" asked her mother, as they took their early-morning coffee and rolls in their steam-heated bedroom.

"Oh! the Cathedral, I suppose," was the unenthusiastic reply. "One's first visit in a foreign town is always to the Cathedral. Gothic architecture and incense are relics of an age with which I have little sympathy. But undoubtedly it is our duty to see the Cathedral—and we will get it over."

"I love cathedrals," said Mrs. Perowne, who, for a respectable Englishwoman of low-church ancestry, had an unholy affection for incense. "All the same, the pleasure or duty, whichever it may be, is one which we shall not get over so soon. The Cathedral, I hear, is being prepared for the late King's funeral service, and the public are temporarily excluded."

"I am much relieved to hear it. However, there is another cheerful structure, an old prison or torture-house called the Straßburg; we might do that."

"That is open on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday mornings, and to-day is Tuesday."

"Another excitement postponed! We must wait till this afternoon for our intellectual delights. This morning I think I shall skate."

"Skate!" said Mrs. Perowne. "Where?"

"My guide-book tells me there is a lake called the Rundsee in the Public Park, where people skate to the accompaniment of a band which plays every morning from ten to twelve. They say the Grimlanders skate divinely, and I am dying to practise my edges before we go to Wolfshaden."

Mrs. Perowne rose and opened the window to let some of the steamy air out and some of the cool air in. The mist which had descended on the city at nightfall was yielding to the blandishments of the still invisible sun. Already the sky held a suspicion of a faint blue beneath the slowly unravelling curtains of filmy grey, and there was a promise of a crisp, windless, exhilarating day, such as is dear to the heart of the skater.

"We will take a sleigh and drive to the Thiergarten," she said. "We can skate a little, and when we are tired we can listen to the band."

"Tired! I don't get tired skating," said Phoebe Perowne indignantly.

"You never get tired doing anything you enjoy," retorted the mother quietly, "but you feel the after-effects. I brought you out here primarily for rest, and I mean to see that you don't over-fatigue yourself."

An hour later Mrs. Perowne and her daughter were driving in an open sleigh down the long, unlovely avenue that leads to the entrance gates of the Thiergarten. Half-way down this thoroughfare they were passed by a motor-sleigh containing a chauffeur and two men occupants, the latter being Robert Saunders and the young Baron of Friedrichsheim. They were apparently engaged in close conversation, and had no eyes for other users of the road.

"Why, that's our young friend of the Concordia!" exclaimed Mrs. Perowne.

"The gentleman who doesn't fight," commented the daughter acidly.

"I liked the way he offered his insult a cigar," pursued Mrs. Perowne. "It seemed a modern application of the Biblical injunction to offer the other cheek."

"And I liked the way the soldier ground the cigar under his heel," retorted the daughter.

"Phoebe!" exclaimed Mrs. Perowne, in mildly shocked surprise.

Miss Perowne smiled a little wistfully.

"Oh, don't take me literally, mother. Anything but that. Only——"

"Only what?"

"Only there is a different atmosphere here from England. There we work with rhetoric, mass meetings, paper resolutions, and paragraphs, whereas here——"

"But you haven't been in Grimland more than twenty-four hours," objected the mother, "and you can know nothing about it."

"I have seen a good many faces in those twenty-four hours, mother, and I have taken this air into my lungs a good many times. And there is something in the faces I have seen, something in the air I have breathed, that tells me there is only one argument in Grimland—force; one virtue—strength; one road to fortune—fearlessness."

"Good gracious! Phoebe," ejaculated Mrs. Perowne. "Don't tell me you're thinking of becoming one of those dreadful 'militants.'"

Phoebe smiled cold scorn on the suggestion, though whether the scorn was for its absurdity or its obviousness she herself did not know.

"If I lived in Grimland," she said with a far-away look, "I should either be an ultra-militant—or cease to be a suffragist altogether."

"I fear I have brought you to the wrong country," said her mother quietly.

Phoebe shook her head. "You have brought me to the right country," she said. "Men are men here—and doubtless the women are women also."

"And therefore don't want votes," thought Mrs. Perowne, but did not say it.

In silence they drove between the rococo stone piers that formed the entrance to the park, and at once found themselves in a world of great trees laden with a winter burden of glittering snow wreaths. The sun shone clear of fog, and the pale blue promise of the heavens had materialized into an almost opaque azure. As they proceeded down a winding avenue of gigantic oaks and chestnuts their ears were met by the ever-deepening roar that tells of clean ice vibrating under the steel-shod feet of innumerable skaters. Presently they came to a big lake, thick frozen, neatly swept, on which several hundred men and women were taking the form of exercise most beloved by all classes of Grimlanders.

The ladies dismissed their sleigh, put on their skates in the pavilion provided for the purpose, and ventured on to the ice.

Miss Perowne, who was an admirable skater, lent dutiful assistance to her mother, who was considerably less expert. When the elder lady had acquired a certain amount of confidence, the daughter commenced to essay those figures, edges, and turns which she had learned so painstakingly at Prince's Skating Club in London. A band struck up from a tiny island in the middle of the lake, and simultaneously the bulk of the skaters asserted themselves into couples, and commenced that exhilarating form of enjoyment known as ice-waltzing. Phoebe Perowne looked on with envious delight. The ice was so perfect, the scene so picturesque, the music so invigorating, that she had the strongest possible desire to join in the rhythmic glories of the ice-dance.

"Counters" and "threes to a centre" had seemed satisfying things till the music began, but the sight of numberless couples, flushed of cheek, bright of eye, swinging and gyrating to the beat and pulse of the "Blue Danube," made her long for a keener delight than the academic and solitary satisfaction of a well-executed "eight."

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