

THE ARROW OF GOLD

Blunt had calmed down suddenly and assumed a nonchalant pose.

"As a matter of fact, Henry Allègre caught her very early one morning in his own old garden full of thrushes and other small birds. She was sitting on a stone, a fragment of some old balustrade, with her feet in the damp grass, and reading a tattered book of some kind. She had on a short, black, two-penny frock (*une petite robe de deux sous*) and there was a hole in one of her stockings. She raised her eyes and saw him looking down at her thoughtfully over that ambrosian beard of his, like Jove at a mortal. They exchanged a good long stare, for at first she was too startled to move; and then he murmured, "*Restez donc.*" She lowered her eyes again on her book and after a while heard him walk away on the path. Her heart thumped while she listened to the little birds filling the air with their noise. She was not frightened. I am telling you this positively because she has told me the tale herself. What better authority can you have . . . ?" Blunt paused.

"That's true. She's not the sort of person to lie about her own sensations," murmured Mills above his clasped hands.

"Nothing can escape his penetration," Blunt remarked to me with that equivocal urbanity which made me always feel uncomfortable on Mills' account. "Positively nothing." He turned to Mills again. "After some minutes of immobility—she told me—she arose from her stone and walked slowly on the track of that apparition. Allègre was nowhere to be seen by that time. Under the gateway of the extremely ugly tenement house, which hides the Pavilion and the garden from the street, the wife of the porter was waiting with her arms akimbo. At once she cried out to Rita: 'You were caught by our gentleman.'