

stuck in your button-hole! Then I think, Mr. Armitage, I rather like scallywags.'

Madame Ceriolo brought her eyes (and eyeglasses) back from space, where they had been firmly fixed on a point in the heavens at an infinite distance, and ejaculated in mild and solemn surprise: 'But why, my dear Nea?'

'Oh, because, Madame, scallywags are always by far the most interesting people in the world. They're so much more likely to be original and amusing than all the rest of us. Artists and authors, for example, are almost always scallywags.'

'What a gross libel on two liberal professions!' Armitage put in, with a shocked expression of face.

He dabbled in water-colours as an amateur himself, and therefore considered he was very nearly implicated in this wholesale condemnation of Art and Literature.

'As far as I'm concerned,' Madame Ceriolo said with angelic softness, rearranging her *pince-nez*, 'I hate originality. And I'm not very fond of artists and authors. Why should people wish to be different from their fellow-Christians?'

'Who is it you're calling a scallywag, any way?' Isabel Boyton asked from her seat beyond with her clear American accent.

If Madame Ceriolo was going to start an abstract discussion on an ethical question of wide extent, Isabel meant, with Philadelphian practicality, to nail her down at once to the matter in hand, and resolutely resist all attempts at digression.

'Why, this new man, Gascoyne,' Armitage drawled out in answer, annexing a vacant chair just abandoned by a fat old Frenchman in the background by the *café*, and seating himself opposite them.

'It's a good name—Gascoyne,' Nea suggested quietly.

'Yes, indeed,' Miss Boyton echoed, with American promptitude. 'A first-rate name. I've read it in a history-book.'

'But a good name doesn't count for much nowadays,' Madame Ceriolo interposed, and then straightway repented her. Anybody can assume a good name, of course; but surely *she* was the last person on earth who ought to have called attention, just then, to the facility of the assumption. For did she not print a countess's coronet on the top of her