

glutted with goods of their quality. And what shall I tell you? Oh! it kills me to think of it. Madame Justans has actually declared to her circle that she has for the first time, after being a wife for twelve years, hopes of being a mother! You were scarcely beyond the barrier before the important fact was public property; and the pleasantest part of all is, that her husband, the old colonel, is in a state of unqualified delight about it. By the way, the Comte Tournon and his wife have separated, and it was more respectable that they should. But I have had a real sorrow since we parted. You have heard me very often speak of my best and kindest friend Mrs. Somers, the wife of the English clergyman, she who attended me and comforted me in my illness two years ago—she died in Brittany, where she had gone for change of air. But I will not say more about what vexes me, and perhaps cannot interest you."

And thus she flew from subject to subject, until we were at the door of the Jew's residence.

"Ah! here we are," she continued, putting her hand to the bell; "now I may just mention that my object in coming ——" but the door opened. To Miss Wilmont's demand as to whether Mr. Isaacs was now at home, the Jewish handmaiden replied in the affirmative, and we were straightway ushered into a small room, where the old Israelite was seated, and received us evidently under the impression that he saw in us two new victims to his rapacity.

"I understand," said Miss Wilmont, looking at a card she held in her hand, "that you deal extensively in pearls, Mr. Isaacs. Is it not so?"

"Ah! 'suredly, I buy and sell, and have de pearls."

"I understand so. Pray sir, do you happen to have a very large one in your possession at present?"

"My gar: yes madame," said the Jew. "Only two days ago I buy one of a Frenchman; de finest—de finest and largest, I do on my shole believe, in de norde of Europe. But it is *very* precious!"

The Jew, eyeing us askance, removed the top from a flat case, when there certainly greeted our sight a collection of gems perfectly dazzling to it. Miss Wilmont contemplated for a few seconds the

part appropriated to the pearls, when suddenly, and with a cry as of joy, she pounced upon the largest, which she held fast. The Jew seized her hand instantaneously, and screamed for help. We again, full of amazement, but acting under the impulse of the moment, on seeing a woman so handled, applied one hand to the throat of the Jew, while with the other we seized the wrist of the hand which held that of Miss Wilmont containing the pearl.

"Sarah! Rebecca! Call the city guard—call murder! thieves!" shouted the old man; while just as the Jew's servant entered, Miss Wilmont fainted, and her hand relaxing its hold, the pearl fell on the floor, broken to atoms by the pressure of the rings which were on her fingers!

Smelling salts and a little water recovered Miss Wilmont to presence of mind; and when precisely informed as to what had passed, she said, "There is the money, Mr. Isaacs, which I brought to pay for the pearl—now," she added, "unhappily lost irretrievably. But do oblige me by letting me have the fragments in a bit of paper."

I did my best to appear unconscious that anything very much out of joint had occurred; and the Jew, having received double the value of his gem, seemed content to lock fast his treasures without requiring farther explanation of the scene which we are inclined to think must have been utterly unintelligible to him. Miss Wilmont came to our rescue, by remarking that she had not been so seized with illness for very long; that she was extremely grieved at having broken the pearl; and, expressing to Mr. Isaacs her regret for the trouble she had given him, requested he would desire his servant to procure a hackney carriage for her. Isaacs, probably pleased to suppose that we were unconscious of having been swindled in regard to the price he had exacted, was all readiness and courtesy. We accordingly had Miss Wilmont conveyed to her hotel, where she again fainted before she could offer us any explanation of what had just occurred. She remained in bed alarmingly ill for eight or ten days. Her maid was fortunately with her. We called twice every day, and saw the doctor, too; and her *femme* told us that her mistress desired her to say, that she hoped