

of mind there is no knowing what folly you are capable of. I believe if you met the Baron Fritz at the present moment you would fall in love with him on the spot."

Phoebe smiled in a superior way. "What terrible folly!" she said sarcastically, "to fall in love with a hero!"

"There are plenty of heroes in England," said Mrs. Perowne sharply; "only they don't go about killing their fellow-creatures. If you ever marry I should prefer a decent-minded, sober Englishman as a son-in-law, to some hot-blooded cut-throat with a fantastic title and the homicidal instincts of a cave-dweller."

Mrs. Perowne rarely had the last word in verbal dissension with her offspring, but she had it now. Possibly her peroration was sufficiently portentous to crush Phoebe's normal faculty of retort. Possibly her mother's treatment of a romantic subject appeared to Phoebe to travel on such a low plane of thought as to be beneath criticism and below contempt. Perhaps, however, the girl was conscious of a measure of truth and discernment lacking among the commonplace theories enunciated by her well-meaning but prosaic parent. She was certainly conscious of change in herself. Things that had appeared right—nay indispensable—in England, appeared indispensable no longer. She doubted whether they even appeared right. Her theories were born of the trim hedgerow and decently paved city, and they wilted in a land of rugged mountains and among the snow-blocked streets of Weidenbruck. Grimland no more resembled England than the Wars of the Roses resembled the evolutions of Territorials on Salisbury Plain. Here the old primordial law of violence was a living thing. Lethal weapons were lethal weapons, not picturesque appendages carried by perspiring Tommies on bloodless route-marching. Woman's rights! Yes, they existed at all times since Eve presented Adam with an apple and a fratricidal offspring. Woman's right was to be loved, to be a wife, a mother, the mystic emblem of creation. What else mattered? She had come to Grimland as a vestal virgin burning the sacred oil of progressive femininity. But behold! the lamp of her was kindled with another and a stronger flame. Her mother saw the flame and was afraid. She expressed her fear in prosaic and banal phrases, but she had justice on her side. Phoebe was conscious of great things bursting through the soil of her young life, and she was cognizant of the danger as well as the beauty of the process. But to youth danger is negligible and beauty paramount, and to Phoebe, sensitive, highly strung, revitalized by a new atmosphere and new emotions, the main thing seemed to be to live fully rather than to live prudently.

IT was her mother who broke the long silence that followed her last speech.

"Take your things off, and get ready for lunch," she said. "We must not forget there is packing to be done."

Phoebe rose. "I am going out," she said.

"But it is lunch-time," protested her mother.

"Very likely. I am not hungry. I want to say good-bye to Weidenbruck. I love this crazy old town, as you call it. I love the shadowy streets and the disreputable people who inhabit them. I am going to have a last look round, for it is possible I shall never see Weidenbruck again."

"But, Phoebe, dear, you must eat."

"O! I will eat when I get to a real winter-resort, with an appetite stimulated by real winter sports, and with 'nice' people sitting round me munching prunes and rice at the table d'hôte."

Mrs. Perowne made no further protest. She had not been opposed on her main point—their instant departure from the capital; and she conceded the minor one. When she descended to the hall, Phoebe demanded a directory. She searched in it for the name of Lugner, but the name of Lugner was not inscribed therein. She put the question to the hall-porter.

"No, lady," he replied. "I have never heard of such a name. It scarcely sounds like a real name. Are you certain you are not mistaken?"

"Absolutely certain," snapped Phoebe. "Where is the post office?"

"At the corner of the Bahnhofstrasse and the Petergasse. If there is anyone of the name of Lugner living in Weidenbruck—"

"Thank you," said Phoebe, and saluted forth into the street.

The post-office officials threw no more light on the whereabouts of the mythical Herr Lugner than the concierge of the Concordia. Phoebe's irritation deepened. She desired to inquire after the health of a man who had been injured in their company, that was all—at least that was the way she put it to herself. Then occurred one of those coincidences which are ascribed to Chance, Fate, or Providence, according to the creed of the person who experiences them. The object of her quest came round a corner, hurrying down the street towards her. Towards her, but not in order to meet her. His mien was preoccupied, his eyes had a distant look scarcely noting his present surroundings, and his gait was the embodiment of incontinent haste. This was not quite the Herr Lugner she was accustomed to, but the identity was beyond doubt. There was the bandaged cheek and the slung arm, if other evidence was lacking. She smiled and bowed graciously as he drew near, but his eyes were focused a mile away, and she might as well have bowed to a lamp-post or a pillar-box for all the notice that was taken of her salutation.

"Herr Lugner," she called, but he strode on unheeding. Then as if some slow cell of his brain had tardily received its message, he checked himself and looked round. Recognition crept into his eyes. He took off his hat with his left hand.

"A thousand pardons" he exclaimed. "My thoughts were far away, and I was in a great hurry."

"Too great a hurry to speak to me? I was coming to see you."

"You were coming to see me!" he ejaculated.

"I WISHED to inquire after your wounds. How are they? You must be better, or you would not be about—and walking so vigorously."

"I am much better, thank you. In fact, I am quite well. But I should like to have the use of my right arm."

A natural wish, but expressed with such emphasis that Phoebe uttered a feeble "Why?"

"Because—because, Gott in Himmel! I wish to use it."

"I suppose so," she acquiesced lamely. "I am absurdly inquisitive to-day. For instance, I am wondering why you of all people are in such a tearing hurry."

"The King—" he began, and then stopped abruptly.

"The King, yes; go on," said Phoebe.

"No," he replied. "It would not interest you."

"On the contrary you interest me very much. In fact, you tantalize me. What about the King?"

"The King is dead—long live the King! Miss Perowne, I deplore my apparent rudeness, but I am indeed in haste. Forgive my abruptness." He raised his hat.

She held out her beautifully gloved hand. "Then good-bye," she said. "We are leaving Weidenbruck to-day."

"You are leaving Weidenbruck to-day!" he repeated with obvious disappointment, taking her right hand in his left and holding it longer and tighter than convention warranted.

She looked him full in the face and smiled. "You speak as if you were really sorry," she said.

"I am really sorry," he replied. "So am I. I have conceived a stupid affection for Weidenbruck."

"Then you will return," he answered. "What woman wills, God wills, as the proverb says."

(To be continued.)

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