

## TWO OF A TRADE

"Oh, then, I'll soon coax him over. I'm glad you mentioned it to him, for I have long been anxious to go to the Continent."

"You!" cried the squire, almost rising in his excitement.

"Why not?" returned the girl, with great calmness. "Someone would have to look after father. Switzerland's no place for a dreamy man, moping around, not thinking where he is going most of the time. There are too many precipices there for that sort of thing. Why do you look so astonished? I suppose you think two is company and three's none. But I don't care. I give you notice I'm going, so make the best of it, you two. Thought you were going off alone together, did you?"

"I—I—thought——" stammered the squire, but he could get no farther.

"You thought *what?*" she asked, severely.

"That you—and that young London gentleman——"

"Well?"

"Were going—to make a match of it." Desperately the squire made the venture, with quaking heart, and well might he fear for the result; for if ever offended majesty arose from a wicker chair now was the moment. Come to think of it, Madaline herself would not have done so badly on the stage.

"The idea!" she said, with withering scorn.

Tom Cobleigh also had risen, a growing joy in his heart, returning hope whispering pleasant things to his agitated mind.

"Then it's not true, Madaline? And if it isn't—if it isn't—is there any chance for me?"

"Chance of what? Going to Switzerland? I should think so, if you make up your mind to go."