

landlord to be deprived of all credit for his hospitable intentions merely on account of an error on the part of the clerk. We drank to his health then, and we will do so now. Here is to your health, Mr.—; and to yours, you kind friend, who showed us the non-fortified Fort Russell; and to yours, you young Canadian gentleman, who told us those sad stories about Denver; and we hereby invoke a malison on the Grand Central Hotel of that city, on account of its cockroaches, and its vinous decoctions, and its incivility; but all this is highly improper, and premature, and a breach of confidence.

We did indeed spend a pleasant evening that night at Cheyenne; for we had ordered for our banquet all the strangest dishes on the bill of fare, just to give our friends a notion of the sort of food they would have to encounter during their stay in the West. And then these steaks of antelope and mountain sheep and black-tailed deer derived a certain romance from the presence, on the walls of the room, of splendid heads and antlers, until it appeared to us that we must be mighty hunters just sitting down to supper, with the trophies won by our own sword and spear hung up around us. And then our Prussian strategist—who had acquired such a vast and intimate acquaintance with the Indians from his conversation with the Omaha idiot—proceeded to explain to us his plan of an Indian campaign; which showed that he was quite fitted to take the command of all the red men in Dakota. We were treated to a dose of history, too; to show that, in desperation, the Indians have often risen to commit a general massacre, apparently with no ulterior motive whatever. And of course, when Sitting Bull had swept down on Cheyenne and drunk its taverns dry, and when he had swept down on Denver and filled his pockets—if any—with sham French jewelry, surely he would come up to Idaho to pay a certain young lady a friendly call?

"Bell," said her husband, "you shall have a laurel wreath ready, and you will have all the neighbours trained and ready, and when the great chief approaches, you will all burst out with 'Heil dir im Siegerkranz!'"

"In the mean time," said Bell, sedately, "if we are to catch the train for Denver at five in the morning, we had better get to bed."

CHAPTER XLIX.

IN SOCIETY.

FIVE in the morning—pitch-darkness all around the station—a clear starlit sky—the flashing belt and sword of Orion almost right overhead. We had our breakfast of bread and apples in the great empty saloon; then we went out on to the platform, wondering when the Cyclops eye of the train would come flaring through the dark. For now we were within a few hours' journey of the point to which those messages were to be directed which would finally set at rest one or two grave problems; and there was a good deal of nervousness visible among our women-folk when we touched on these probabilities. But Lady Sylvia showed no nervousness at all. She was eager, buoyant, confident. She was clearly not afraid of any telegram or letter that might be awaiting her at Denver. Nay, when her friends, shivering in the cold and darkness of the early morning, were complaining of the railway arrangements that compelled us to get up at such an hour, she made light of the matter, and showed how, as we went south, we should have the beautiful spectacle of the sunrise breaking on the Rocky Mountains.

At length the train came along, and we got into the warm carriage, in which the conductor was engaged in cramming a blazing stove with still further blocks of wood. Very soon we were away from the scattered shanties of Cheyenne, out on the lone prairie-land that was to be our Bell's future home. And as we sat and silently looked out of the windows, watching a pale glow arise in the east, and trying to make out something on the dark plains below, suddenly we caught sight of some flashing lights of red and yellow. These were the breakfast fires of some travellers camping out—probably miners or traders making for the Black Hills with a train of waggons and oxen. The light in the east increased; and then we saw all along the western horizon the great wall of the Rocky Mountains become visible in a stream of colour—the peaks the faintest rose, the shadowy bulk below a light, transparent, beautiful blue. The morning came on apace; the silvery grays of the east yielding to a glowing saffron. There seemed to be no mists lying on these high plains, for, as the sun rose, we could see an immense distance