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ately anxious to know. I want to see him; I mean to see him before we leave Weidenbruck."

"Then you must make haste."

"Why?" demanded Phoebe.

"Because we are leaving Weidenbruck at four o'clock this afternoon."

Phoebe opened her eyes in astonishment. She was fully under the impression that their stay in the capital was to be prolonged for several days. Anyway, she expected to be consulted on a change of plans. There was, however, a touch of finality in her mother's tones, that told her that argument or expostulation would be futile. Mrs. Perowne very seldom put her foot down; when she did no power on earth short of an hydraulic crane could lift it.

"But why this sudden flight?" asked Phoebe at length, with obvious disappointment.

"Because I have brought you out here for your health, and I mean to see that you get it. The air of Weidenbruck is cold and damp, and the moral atmosphere is worse."

"But it agrees with me wonderfully," protested Phoebe, with a smile. "I never felt better, physically or morally, in my life."

"That is because you are excited. The place is stimulating, I admit; but you live too fast in it. Look at the affair of last night! It was monstrous."

"I am glad to have lived through it," retorted the mother. "But I propose to take you to a real winter-resort, a place where the diversions are of a wholesome nature, and anarchists and other unsavoury people are conspicuous by their absence."

"And," Phoebe sighed, "where there are a lot of English and American people, who are the exact counterparts in mind, outlook, and appearance, of the dear people who make the London 'season' ten weeks of undiluted boredom."

"We may find some very nice people at Weissheim," said Mrs. Perowne.

"WILL there be a Red Virgin there, or a Cyril of Wolfsnaden, or a Fritz or Friedrichsheim?"

"I devoutly hope not."

"But why, Mother, why?"

"My dear Phoebe, since you insist on having an explanation you shall have it. I see a great change in you these last few days. I don't pretend altogether to understand you, although you are my own child. In England you despise male society. Well and good. Some girls, especially pretty girls who are bothered with a lot of attention, are apt to dislike men's society. I never did when I was your age, but that's neither here nor there. I am old-fashioned, and believe in nature. You are up-to-date and believe in woman's rights, and the 'higher sexlessness,' whatever that may mean. But do me the justice to say that I have never combated your views, or hindered your propaganda."

Phoebe mutely signified assent by a slight inclination of her head.

"Well," continued Mrs. Perowne, "the inevitable happened. You became run down. The 'higher sexlessness' is a very beautiful thing, no doubt, but anaemia and 'nerves,' which seem inevitably to accompany it, are not; Doctor Fulbrook prescribed a winter at high altitude, and I brought you here. What is the result? We stay a few days in this crazy town, en route for Weissheim, and you become as mad as the people who live here all their lives."

"I am not conscious of madness."

"Lunatics never are. The 'higher sexlessness' vanishes, which is perhaps a good thing. But instead we have something else even more unwholesome. You appear to have a gentleman called Fritz of Friedrichsheim on the brain, you are attracted by a good-looking, good-for-nothing detrimental called Herr Lugner, and you have a morbid fascination for an ungodly creature who styles herself the Red Virgin."

"At any rate these people are picturesque—they are alive."

"Undoubtedly they are picturesque; unfortunately they are also alive. What I mean is, that I am determined you shall not fall under their influence. In your present unhealthy condition

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