

seriousness in the judge's face is too slight to call for notice—a mere twinkle to be ignored. Very little self-deception is necessary, and in this department success is invariable.

"I knew you would say so, dear," Tishy continues. "And I'm sure you would about the other things too . . . well, I was thinking about tea in Kensington Gardens on Sunday. We have both of us a perfect right to have tea independently, and the only question is about separate tables."

"Suppose I come—to make it square."

"Suppose you do, dear." And the proposal is a relief evidently.

A very slight insight into the little drama that is going on at Ladbrooke Grove Road is all that is wanted for the purposes of this story. The foregoing dialogue, ending at the point at which the two young women disappear into the door of No. 287, will be sufficient to give a fairly clear idea of the plot of the performance, and to point to its *dénouement*. The exact details may unfold themselves as the story proceeds. The usual thing is a stand-up fight over the love-affair, both parties to which have made up their minds—becoming more and more obdurate as they encounter opposition from without—followed by reconciliations more or less real. Let us hope for the former in the present case, and that Miss Wilson and Mr. Bradshaw's lot may not be crossed by one of those developments of strange inexplicable fury which so often break out in families over the schemes of two young people to do precisely what their parents did before them; and most ungovernably, sometimes, on the part of members who have absolutely no suggestion to make of any alternative scheme for the happiness of either.

CHAPTER XIX

HOW FENWICK KNEW ALL ABOUT THE MASS. AND HOW BARON KREUTZ-KAMMER RECOGNISED MR. HARRISSON. LONDON AGAIN!

"WHY do they call it the *messe des paresseux*?" The question must have been asked just as Sally looked at her watch because she saw the clock had stopped. But the nave of the Cathedral of Rheims was very unlike that of St. Satisfax as the bride and bridegroom lingered in out of the sunshine, and the former took the unwarrantable liberty, for a heretic, of crossing herself from the Holy Water at the foot of the column near the door. But she made up for it by the amount of *sous* she gave to the old blind woman, who must have been knitting there since the days of Napoleon at least, if she began in her teens.

"You haven't done it right, dearest. I knew you wouldn't. Look here." And Fenwick crosses himself *secundum artem*, dipping his finger first to make it valid.

"But how came you to know?" His wife does not say this; she only thinks it. And how came he to know about the *messe des paresseux*? She repeats her question aloud.

"Because the lazy people don't come to Mass till ten," he replies. They are talking under their breath, as English folk do in foreign churches, heedless of the loud gabble and resonant results of too much snuff on the part of ecclesiastics off duty. Their own salvation has been cultivated under a list slipper, cocoanut matting, secretive pew-opener policy; and if they are new to it all, they are shocked to see the snuff taken over the heads and wooden *sabots* of the devout country-folk, whose ancestors knelt on the same hard stone centuries ago, and prayed for great harvests that never came, and to avert lean years that very often did. The Anglican cannot understand the real aboriginal Papist. Sally's mother was puzzled when she saw an old, old kneeling figure, toothless and parchment-skinned, on whose rosary a pinch of snuff *ut supra* descended, shake it

off the bead in evidence, and get on to the next *Ave*, even as one who has business before her—so many pounds of oakum to pick, so many bushels of peas to shell. It was a reality to her; and there was the Blessed Virgin herself, a visible certainty, who would see to the recognition of it at headquarters.

Fenwick passed up the aisle, dreamily happy in the smell of the incense, beside his bride of yesterday's making—she intensely happy too, but in another way, for was not her bridegroom of yesterday her husband of twenty years ago—cruelly wrenched away, but her husband for all that. Still, there was always that little rift within the lute that made the music—pray Heaven not to widen! Always that thought!—that he might recollect. How could he remember the *messe des pairesseux*, and keep his mind a blank about how he came to know of it? It was the first discomfort that had crossed her married mind—put it away!

It was easy to put it all away and forget it in the hush and gloom of the great church, filled with the strange intonation from Heaven-knows-where—some side-chapel unseen—of a Psalm it would have puzzled David to be told was his, and a scented vapour Solomon would have known at once; for neither myrrh nor frankincense have changed one whit since his day. It was easy enough so long as both sat listening to *Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax*. Carried *nem. con.* by all sorts and conditions of Creeds. But when the little bobs and tokens and skirt-adjustments of the fat priest and his handsome abettor (a young fellow some girl might have been the wife of, with advantage to both) came to a pause, and the congregation were to be taken into confidence, how came Gerry to know beforehand what the fat one was going to say, with that stupendous voice of his?

"*Hoc est corpus meum, et hic est calix sanguinis mei.* We all kneel, I think." Thus the bridegroom under his breath. And his companion heard, almost with a shudder, the selfsame words from the priest, as the kneeling of the congregation subsided.

"Oh, Gerry—darling fellow! How *can* you know that, and not know . . ."

"How I came by it? It's very funny, but I *can't*, and that's

the truth. I don't feel as if I ever *could* know, what's more. But it all seems a matter of course."

"Perhaps you're a Catholic all the while, without knowing it?"

"Perhaps I am. But I should like to know, because of going to the other place with you. I shouldn't care about purgatory without you, Rosey dearest. No—not even with a reversionary interest in heaven."

And then the plot thickened at the altar, and the odour of myrrh and frankincense, and little bells rang to a climax, and the handsome young priest, let us hope, felt he had got value for the loss of that hypothetical girl.

That little incident in the great church at Rheims was the first anxiety of Rosalind Fenwick's married life—the first resumption of the conditions she had been so often unnerved by during the period of their betrothal. She was destined to be crossed by many such. But she was, as we have said, a strong woman, and had made up her mind to take these anxieties as part of the day's work—a charge upon her happiness that had to be paid. It was a great consolation to her that she could speak to her husband about the tension caused by her misgivings without assigning any special reasons for anxiety that would not be his as much as hers. She had to show uneasiness in order to get the relief his sympathy gave her; but there were unknown possibilities in the Bush enough to warrant it without going outside what was known to both. No need at all that he should know of her separate unseen burden, for that!

But some of the jolts on the road, as we might call them, were to be sore trials to Rosalind. One came in the fourth week of their honeymoon, and quite spoiled for her the last three days of her holiday. However, Fenwick himself laughed about it—that was one comfort.

It was at Sonnenberg. You know the Great Hotel, or Pension, near the Seelisberg, that looks down on Lucerne Lake, straight over to where Tell shot the arrow? If you do not, it does not matter. Mr. and Mrs. Fenwick had never been there before, and have never been there since. And what happened

might just as easily have happened anywhere else. But it was there, as a matter of fact; and if you know the place, you will be able to imagine the two of them leaning on the parapet of the terrace that overlooks the lake, watching the steamer from Lucerne creeping slowly to the landing-place at the head of a white comet it has churned the indescribable blue of the lake to, and discussing whether it is nearest to Oriental sapphire or to green jasper at its bluest.

Rosalind had got used to continual wonderment as to when and where Fenwick had come to know so well this thing and that thing he spoke of so familiarly; so she passed by the strange positiveness of his speech about the shades of jasper, the scarcity of really blue examples, and his verdict that the bluest possible one would be just the colour of that water below them. She was not going to ask him how he came to be so mighty wise about chalcedony and chrysoprase and sardonyx, about which she herself either never knew or had forgotten. She took it all as a matter of course, and asked if the Baron's cigar was a good one.

"Magnificent!" Fenwick replied, puffing at it. "How shall we return his civility?"

"Give *him* a cigar next time you get a chance."

Fenwick laughs, in derision of his own cigars.

"God bless me, my dearest love! Why, one of the Baron's is worth my whole box. We must discover something better than that." Both ponder over possible reciprocities in silence, but discover nothing, and seem to give up the quest by mutual consent. Then he says: "I wonder why he cosseted up to us last night in the garden so!" And she repeats: "I wonder why!"

"I don't believe he even knows our name," she continues; and then he repeats: "I don't believe he knows our name. I'm sure he doesn't."

"And it was so dark, he couldn't have seen much of us. But his cigar's quite beautiful. Blow the smoke in my face, Gerry!" She shuts her eyes to receive it. How handsome Sally would think mamma was looking if she could see her now in the light of the sunset! Her husband thinks much to that effect, as he turns to blow the smoke on order into the face that is so close to his, as they lean arm-in-arm on the parapet the sun has left his

warmth on, and means to take his eyes off in half an hour. They really look quite a young couple, and the frivolity of their conduct adds to the effect. Nobody would believe in her grown-up daughter, to see that young Mrs. Algernon Fenwick.

"I am ferry root, Mrs. Harrisson. If I introot, you shall say I introot." It is the Baron, manifestly. His form—or rather his bulk, for he cannot be said to have a form; he is amorphous—is baronial in the highest degree. His stupendous chest seems to be a huge cavern for the secretion of gutturals, which are discharged as heavy artillery at a hint from some unseen percussion-cap within.

Mrs. Fenwick starts, a little taken aback at the Baron's thunderclap; for he had approached unawares, and her closed eyes helped on the effect. When they opened, they looked round, as for a third person. But the Baron was alone.

"Where is Mrs. Harrisson?" She asks the question with the most absolute unconsciousness that she was herself the person addressed. The Baron, still believing, presumably, that Fenwick is *Mr.* Harrisson, is not a person to be trusted with the position created. He develops an offensive waggery, shakes the forefinger that has detected an escapade, and makes of his lips the round *O* of shocked propriety, at heart in sympathy with the transgressor. His little grey eyes glare through his gold-rimmed spectacles, and his huge chest shakes with a substratum of laughter, only just loud enough to put in the text.

"O-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho! No, do not be afraid. She is not here. We unterzdant. It is all unterzdoot. We shall be ferry tizgreet. . . ." And then the Baron pats space with his fingers only, not moving his hand, as a general indication of secrecy to the universe.

Probably the slight flush that mantles the face he speaks to is less due to any offence at his fat, good-humoured German raillery than to some vague apprehension of the real nature of the position about to develop. But Fenwick imputes it to the former. If Rosey was inclined to treat the thing as a harmless joke, he would follow suit; but she looks hurt, and her husband, sensitive about every word that is said to her, blazes out:

"What on earth do you mean? What the devil do you mean? How dare you speak to my wife like that?" He makes a half-

step towards the burly mass of flesh, still shaking with laughter. But his wife stops him.

"Do be patient, Gerry darling! Don't flare up like that. I'll have a divorce. I'll tell Sally . . ." a threat which seems to have a softening effect. "Can't you see, dear, that there is some misunderstanding?" Fenwick looks from her to the Baron, puzzled. The latter drops his jocular rallying.

"I saw last night you did not know me, Mr. Harrison. That is straintch! Have you forgotten Diedrich Kreutzkammer?" He says his name with a sort of quiet confidence of immediate recognition. But Fenwick only looks blankly at him.

"He does not know me!" cries the German, with an astonished voice. "'Frisco—the Klondyke—Chicago—the bridge at Brooklyn—why, it is not two years ago . . ." He pauses between the names of the places, enforcing each as a reminder with an active forefinger.

Fenwick seems suddenly to breathe the fresh air of a solution of the problem. He breaks into a sunny smile, to his wife's great relief.

"Indeed, Baron Kreutzkammer, *my* name is not Harrison. *My* name is Fenwick, and this lady is my wife—Mrs. Fenwick. I have never been in any of the places you mention." For the moment he forgot his own state of oblivion: a thing he was getting more and more in the habit of doing. The Baron looked intently at him, and looked again. He slapped his forehead, not lightly at all, but as if good hard slaps would really correct his misapprehensions and put him right with the world.

"I am all *wronck*," he said, borrowing extra force from an indurated *g*. "But it is ferry bustling—I am bustled!" By this he meant puzzled. Fenwick felt apologetic.

"I don't know how to thank you for the cigar Mr. Harrison ought to have had," said he. He felt really ashamed of having smoked it under false pretences.

"You shall throw it away, and I giff you one for yourself. That is eacey! But I am bustled."

He continued puzzled. Mrs. Fenwick felt that he was only keeping further comment and inquiry in check because it would have been a doubt thrown on her husband's word to make any. Her uneasiness would have been visible if her power of conceal-

ing it had not been fortified by her belief that his happiness as well as hers depended (for the present, at any rate) on his ignorance of his own past. Perhaps she was wrong; with that we have nothing to do; we are telling of things as they happened. Only we wish to record our conviction that Rosalind Fenwick was acting for her husband's sake as well as her own—not from a vulgar instinct of self-preservation.

The Baron made conversation, and polished his little powerful spectacle-lenses. He blew his nose like a salute of one gun in the course of his polishing. When *we* blow *our* nose, we hush our pocket-handkerchief back into its home, and ignore it a little. The Baron didn't. He continued polishing on an unalloyed corner through the whole of a very perceptible amount of chat about the tricks memory plays us, and the probable depth of the blue water below. Rosalind's uneasiness continued. It grew worse, when the Baron, suddenly replacing his spectacles and fixing his eyes firmly on her husband, said sternly, "Yes, it is a bustle!" but was relieved when equally suddenly, he shouted in a stentorian voice, "We shall meed lader," and took his leave.

"He's a jolly fellow, the Baron, anyhow!" said Fenwick. "I wonder whether they heard him at Altdorf?"

"Every word, I should think. But how I should like to see the Mr. Harrison he took you for!"

This was really part of a policy of nettle-grasping, which continued. She always felt happier after defying a difficulty than after finching. After all, if Gerry's happiness and her own were not motive enough, consider Sally's. If she should really come to know her mother's story, Sally might die of it.

Fenwick went on to the ending of the cigar, dreamily wondering, evidently "bustled" like the Baron. As he blew the last smoke away, and threw the smoking end down the slope, he repeated her words spoken a minute before, "I should like to see the Mr. Harrison he took me for."

"It would be funny to see oneself as ithers see one. Some power might gie you the giftie, Gerry. If only we could meet that Mr. Harrison!"

"Do you remember how we saw our profiles in a glass, and you said, 'I'm sure those are somebody else'? Illogical female!"

"Why was I illogical? I knew they were going to turn out us

in the end. But I was sure I shouldn't be convinced at once." And the talk wandered away into a sort of paradoxical metaphysics.

But when, later in the evening, this lady was described by confidential chat at the far end of the salon as that handsome young Mrs. Algernon Fenwick who was only just married, and whose husband was playing chess in the smoking-room, and what a pity it was they were not going to stop over Monday, she thus described, accurately enough, was rather rejoicing that that handsome Mr. Fenwick, who looked like a Holbein portrait, was being kept quiet for half an hour, because she wanted to get a chance for a little chat with that dreadful noisy Prussian Von, who made all the glasses ring at table when he shouted so. Rosalind had her own share of feminine curiosity, don't you see? and she was not by any means satisfied about Mr. Harrison. She did not acknowledge the nature of her suspicions to herself, but she would very much like to know, for all that! She got her opportunity.

"I shouldn't the least mind myself if smoking *were* allowed in the salon, Baron. You saw to-day that I really liked the smoke?"

"Ja! when I make that chogue. It was a root chogue. But I am forgiffen?"

"It was Gerry who had to be forgiven, breaking out like that. I hope he has promised not to do so any more?"

"He has bromiss to be goot. I have bromiss to be goot. We shall be *sages enfants*, as the French say. But I will tell you, Madame Fenwick, about my vrent Harrison your Cherry is so ligue . . ."

"Let's go out on the terrace, then you can light a cigar and be comfortable. . . . Yes, I'll have my wrap . . . no, that's wrong-side-out . . . that's right now. . . . Well, perhaps it will be a little cool for sitting down. We can walk about."

"Now I can tell you about my vrent in America that your husband is so ligue. He could speague French—ferry well indeed." Rosalind looked up. "It was when I heard your husband speaguign French to that grosse Grafin Pobzodonoff that I think to myself that was Alchernon Harrison that I knew in California."

"Suppose we sit down. I don't think it's too cold. . . . Yes, this place will do nicely. It's sheltered from the wind." If she does look a little pale—and she feels she does—it will be quite invisible in this dark corner, for the night is dark under a canopy of blazing stars. "What were you saying about French?"

"Alchernon Harrison—that was his name—he could speague it well. He spogue *id ligue a nadiff*. Better than I speague English. I speague English so well because I have a *kræes* at Ganderbury." This meant a niece at Canterbury. Baron Kreutzkammer speaks English so well that it is almost a shame to lay stress on his pronunciation of consonants. The spelling is difficult too, so we will give the substance of what he told Rosalind without his articulation. By this time she, for her part, was feeling thoroughly uneasy. It seemed to her—but it may be she exaggerated—that nothing stood between her husband and the establishment of his identity with this Harrison except the difference of name. And how could she know that he had not changed his name? Had she not changed hers?

The Baron's account of Harrison was that he made his acquaintance about three years since at San Francisco, where he had come to choose gold-mining plant to work a property he had purchased at Klondyke. Rosalind found it a little difficult to understand the account of how the acquaintance began, from want of knowledge of mining machinery. But the gist of it was that the Baron, at that time a partner in a firm that constructed stamping-mills, was explaining the mechanism of one to Harrison, who was standing close to a small vertical pugmill, or mixer of some sort, just at the moment the driving-engine had stopped and the fly-wheel had nearly slowed down. He went carelessly too near the still revolving machinery, and his coat-flap was caught and wound into the helix of the pugmill. "It would have crowned me badly," said the Baron. But he remained unground, for Harrison, who was standing close to the moribund fly-wheel, suddenly flung himself on it, and with incredible strength actually cut short the rotation before the Baron could be entangled in a remorseless residuum of crushing power, which, for all it looked so gentle, would have made short work of a horse's thigh-bone. The Baron's coat was spoiled,

though he was intact. But Harrison's right arm had done more than a human arm's fair share of work, and had to rest and be nursed. They had become intimate friends, and the Baron had gone constantly to inquire after the swelled arm. It took time to become quite strong again, he said. It was a fine strong arm, and burned all over with gunpowder, "what you call dad-dooed in English."

"Did it get quite well?"

"Ferry nearly. There was a little blaze in the choint here"—the Baron touched his thumb—"where the bane remained—a roomadic bane. He burgessed a gopper ring for it. It did him no goot." Luckily Rosalind had discarded the magic ring long since, or it might have come into court awkwardly.

If she still entertained any doubts about the identity of her husband and Harrison, the Baron's next words removed them. They came in answer to an expression of wonder of hers that he should so readily accept her husband's word for his identity in the face of the evidence of his own senses. "I really think," she had said, "that if I were in your place I should think he was telling fibs." This was nettle-grasping.

"Ach, ach! No—no—no!" shouted the Baron, so loud that she was afraid it would reach the chess-players in the smoking-room, "I arrife at it by logic, by reasson. Giff me your attention." He held up one finger firmly, as an act of hypnotism, to procure it. "Either I am ride or I am wronck. I cannot be neither."

"You might be mistaken."

The Baron's finger waved this remark aside impatiently. "I will fairy the syllogism," he shouted. "Either your husband is Mr. Harrison, or he is *not*. He cannot be neither." This was granted. "Ferry well, then. If he is Mr. Harrison, Mr. Harrison has doled fips. But I know Mr. Harrison would not dell fips. Imbossible!"

"And if he is not?" The Baron points out that in this case his statement is true by hypothesis, to say nothing of the intrinsic probability of truthfulness on the part of any one so like Mr. Harrison. He is careful to dwell on the fact that this consideration of the matter is purely analysis of a metaphysical crux, indulged in for scientific illumination. He then goes on

to apologize for having been so very positive. But no doubt one or two minor circumstances had so affected his imagination that he saw a very strong likeness where only a very slight one existed. "I shall look again. I shall be wicer next time." But what were the minor circumstances, Rosalind asked.

"There was the French—the lankwitch—that was one. But there was another—his *noce!* I will tell you. When my frent Harrison gribe holt of that wheel, his head go down etchwise." The Baron tried to hint at this with his own head, but his neck, which was like a prize-bull's, would not lend itself to the illustration. "That wheel was ferry smooth—with a sharp gorner. *His noce touch that corner.*" The Baron said no more in words, but pantomimic action and a whistle showed plainly how the wheel-rim had glided on the bridge of Mr. Harrison's nose. "It took off the gewdiggle, and made a sgar. Your hussband's noce has that ferry sgar. That affected my imatchination. It is easy to unterzdant."

But the subject was frightening Rosalind. She would have liked to hear much more about Mr. Harrison; might ever have ended by taking the fat Baron, whom she thoroughly liked, into her confidence. The difficulty, however, was about decision in immediate action, which would be irrevocable. Silence was safer—or, sleep on it at least. For now, she must change the conversation.

"How sweet the singing sounds under the starlight!" But the Baron will not tolerate any such loose inaccuracy.

"It would sount the same in the taydime. The fibrations are the same." But he more than makes up for his harsh prosaism by singing, in unison with the singers unseen:

"Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten
Dass ich so traurig bin. . . ."

No one could ever have imagined that such heavenly sounds could come from anything so fat and noisy. Mrs. Fenwick shuts her eyes to listen.

When she opens them again, jerked back from a temporary dream-paradise by the Baron remarking with the voice of Stentor or Boanerges that it is a "ferry broody lied," her husband is standing there. He has been listening to the music. The Baron

adds that his friend Mr. Harrisson was "ferry vond of that lied."

But when the two of them have said a cordial good-night to the unwieldy nightingale, who goes away to bed, as he has to leave early in the morning, Fenwick is very silent, and once and again brushes his hair about, and shakes his head in his old way. His wife sees what it is. The music has gone as near touching the torpid memory as the wild autumn night and the cloud-race round the moon had done in the little front garden at home a year ago.

"A recurrence, Gerry?" she asks.

"Something of the sort, Rosey love," he says. "Something quite mad this time. There was a steam-engine in it, of all things in the world!" But it has been painful, evidently—a discomfort at least—as these things always are.

Rosalind's apprehension of untimely revelations dictated a feeling of satisfaction that the Baron was going away next day; her regret at losing the choice of further investigation admitted one of dissatisfaction that he had gone. The net result was unsettlement and discomfort, which lasted through the remainder of Sonnenberg, and did not lift altogether until the normallest of normal life came back in a typical London four-wheeler, which dutifully obeyed the injunction to "go slowly," not only through the arch that injunction brooded over, but even to the end of the furlong outside the radius which commanded an extra sixpence and got more. But what did that matter when Sally was found watching at the gate for its advent, and received her stepfather with an undisguised hug as soon as she found it in her heart to relinquish her mother?

CHAPTER XX

MERE DAILY LIFE AT KRAKATOA. BUT SALLY IS QUITE FENWICK'S DAUGHTER BY NOW. OF HER VIEWS ABOUT DR. VEREKER, AND OF TISHY'S AUNT FRANCES

WHEN you come back from a holiday to a sodden and monstrous London, it is best to be welcomed by something young—by a creature that is convinced that it has been enjoying itself, and that convinces you as well, although you can't for the life of you understand the details. Why should anything enjoy itself or anything else in this Cimmerian gloom, while away over there the great Alpine peaks are white against the blue, and elsewhere the music of a hundred seas mixes with their thunder on a thousand shores? Why come home?

But when we do and find that nothing particular has happened, and that there's a card for us on the mantelpiece, how stuffy are our welcomers, and how well they tone into the surrounding grey when they are elderly and respectable? It is different when we find that, from their point of view, it is we that have been the losers by our absence from all the great and glorious fun the days have been made of while we were away on a mistaken and deluded continent, far from this delectable human ant-hill—this centre and climax of Life with a capital letter. But then, when this is so, they have to be young, as Sally was.

The ex-honeymooners came back to jubilant records of that young lady's experience during the five weeks of separation. She listened with impatience to counter records of adventures abroad, much preferring to tell of her own at home. Mr. and Mrs. Fenwick acquiesced in the rôle of listeners, and left the rostrum to Sally after they had been revived with soup, and declined cutlets, because they really had had plenty to eat on the way. The rostrum happened to be a hassock on the hearthrug,