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 otherwhere 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,

before the little bit of fire that wasn't at all unwelcome, because September had set in quite cold already, and there was certain to be a warm Christmas if it went on like this, and it would be very unhealthy.

"And oh, do you know"—thus Sally, after many other matters had been disposed of—"there has been such an awful row between Tishy and her mother about Julius Bradshaw?" Sally is serious and impressed; doesn't see the comic side, if there is one. Her mother felt that if there was to be a volley of indignation discharged at Mrs. Wilson for her share in the row, she herself, as belonging to the class mother, might feel called on to support her, and was reserved accordingly.

"I suppose Lætitia wants to marry Mr. Bradshaw. Is that it?"

"Of course that's it! He hasn't proposed, because he's promised not to; but he will any time Tishy gives a hint. Meanwhile Goody Wilson has refused to sanction his visits at the house, and Lætitia has said she will go into lodgings."

"Sally darling, I do wish you wouldn't call all the married ladies of your acquaintance *Goody*. You'll do it some day to their faces."

"It's only the middle-aged bouncers."

"Well, dear chick, do try and not call them Goody. What did Goo—there! I was going to do it myself. What did Mrs. Wilson say to that?"

"Said Tishy's allowance wouldn't cover lodgings, and she had nothing else to fall back on. So we go into the Park instead."

Even Mrs. Fenwick's habituation to her daughter's incisive method is no proof against this. She breaks into an affectionate laugh, and kisses its provoker, who protests.

"We-e-ell! There's nothing in *that*. We have tea in the shilling places under the trees in Kensington Gardens. *That's* all right."

"Of course that's all right—with a *chaperon* like you! Who *could* say anything? But do tell me, Sally darling, does Mrs. Wilson dislike this young man on his own account, or is it only the shop?"

"Only the shop, I do believe. And Tishy's twenty-four!

What *is* my stepfather sitting smiling at there in that contented way? Is that a Mossoo cigar? It smells very nice."

"I was smiling at you, Sarah. No, it's not a Mossoo that I know of. A German Baron gave it me. . . . No, dearest! It really *was* all right. . . . No—I really can't exactly say how; but it *was* all right for all that. . . ." This was in answer to a comment of his wife.

"Never mind the German Baron," Sally interrupts. "What business have you to smile at me, Jeremiah?" They had christened each other Jeremiah and Sarah for working purposes.

"Because I chose—because you're such a funny little article." He comes a little nearer to her, and putting his arm round her neck, pinches her off-cheek. She gives him a very short kiss—hardly a real one—just an acknowledgment. He remains with her little white hand in his great hairy one, and she leans against him and accepts the position. But that cigar is on her mother's mind.

"How many did he give you, Gerry? Now tell the truth."

"He gave me a lot. I smuggled them. I can't tell you *why* it seemed all right I should accept them. But it *did.*"

"I suppose you know best, dear. Men are men, and I'm a female. But he was such a perfect stranger." She, of course, knew quite well that he was not, but there was nettle-grasping in it on her part.

"Yes, he was. But somehow he didn't seem so. Perhaps it was because I flew into such a rage with him about what he called his 'crade chogue.' But it wasn't *only* that. Something about the chap himself—I can't tell what." And Fenwick becomes *distrait,* with a sort of restless searching on his face. He sits on, silent, patting Sally's little white hand in his, and letting the prized cigar take care of itself, and remains silent until, after a few more interesting details about the "great row" at Ladbroke Grove Road, all three agree that sleep is overdue, and depart to receive payment.

Rosalind knows the meaning of it all perfectly. Some tiny trace of memory of the fat Kreutzkammer lingered in her husband's crippled mind—something as confused as the revolving engine's connexion with the German volkslied. But enough to prevent his feeling the ten francs' worth of cigars an oppres-

sive benevolence. It was very strange to her that it should so happen, but, having happened, it did not seem unnatural. What was stranger still was that Gerry should be there, loving Sally like a father—just as her own stepfather Paul Nightingale had come to love *her*—caressing her, and never dreaming for a moment how that funny little article came about. Yes, come what might, she would do her best to protect these two from that knowledge, however many lies she had to tell. She was far too good and honourable a woman to care a particle about truthfulness as a means to an easy conscience; she did not mind the least how much hers suffered if it was necessary to the happiness of others that it should do so. And in her judgment—though we admit she may have been wrong—a revelation of the past would have taken all the warmth and light out of the happy and contented little world of Krakatoa Villa. So long as she had the cloud to herself, and saw the others out in the sunshine, she felt safe, and that all was well.

She would have liked companionship inside the cloud, for all that. It was a cruel disappointment to find, when she came to reflect on it, that she could not carry out a first intention of taking Colonel Lund into her confidence about the Baron, and the undoubted insight he had given into some portion of Fenwick's previous life. Obviously it would have involved telling her husband's whole story. Her belief that he was Harrisson involved her knowledge that he was not Fenwick. The Major would have said at once: "Why not tell him all this Baron told you, and see if it wouldn't bring all his life back to him?" And then she would have to tell the Major who he really was, to show him the need of keeping silence about the story. No, no! Danger lay that way. Too much finessing would be wanted; too many reserves.

So she bore her secret knowledge alone, for their sakes feeling all the while like the scapegoat in the wilderness. But it was a happy wilderness for her, as time proved. Her husband's temper and disposition were well described by Sally, when she told Dr. Vereker in confidence one day that when he boiled he blew the lid off, but that he was a practical lamb, and was wax in her mother's hands. A good fizz did good, whatever people said. And the doctor agreed cordially. For he had a mother whose

temper was notoriously sweetness itself, but was manipulated by its owner with a dexterity that secured all the effects of discomfort to its beneficiaries, without compromising her own claims to canonization.

Fenwick's temper—this expression always means want of temper, or absence of temper—was of the opposite sort. It occasioned no inconvenience to any one, and every one detected and classed it after knowing him for twenty-four hours. The married couple had not existed for three months in that form before this trivial individuality was defined by Ann and Cook as "only master." Sally became so callous after a slight passing alarm at one or two explosions that she would, for instance, address her stepfather, after hearing his volleys at some offender in the distance, with, "Who did I hear you calling a confounded idiot, Jeremiah?" To which he would reply, softening into a genial smile: "Lost my temper, I did, Sarah dear. Lost my temper with the Wash. The Wash sticks in pins and the heads are too small to get hold of"; or, "People shouldn't lick their envelopes up to the hilt, and spoil one's ripping-corner, unless they want a fellow to swear"; or something similar belonging to the familiar trials of daily life.

But really safety-valve tempers are so common that Fenwick's would scarcely have called for notice if it had not been that, on one occasion, a remark of Sally's about a rather more vigorous *émeute* than usual led her mother, accidentally thrown off her guard, to reply: "Yes! But you have no idea how much better he is——" and then to stop suddenly, seeing the mistake she was making. She had no time to see a way out of the difficulty before Sally, puzzled, looked at her with: "Better than when? I've known him longer than you have, mother." For Sally always boasted of her earlier acquaintance.

"No *when* at all, kitten! How much better he is when we are alone! He never flares up then—that's what I meant." But she knew quite well that her sentence, if finished, would have stood, "how much better he is than he used to be!" She was too candid a witness in the court of her own conscience to make any pretence that this wasn't a lie. Of course it was; but if she never had to tell a worse one than that for Sally's sake, she would be fortunate indeed.

She was much more happy in the court of her conscience than she was in that of St. Satisfax—if we may ascribe a judicial status to him, to help us through with our analysis of her frame of mind. His was a court which, if not identical at all points with the analogous exponents of things Divine in her youth, was fraught with the same jurisdiction; was vocal with resonances that proclaimed the same consequences to the unredeemed that the mumblings of a pastor of her early days, remembered with little gratitude, had been inarticulate with. Her babyhood had received the idea that liars would be sent unequivocally to hell, and her maturity could not get rid of it. Outside the precinct of the saint, the brief working morality that considers other folk first was enough for her; within it, the theologism of an offended deity still held a traditional sway. Outside, her whole soul recoiled from the idea of her child knowing a story that would eat into her heart like a cancer; within, a reserve-corner of that soul, inoculated when it was new and susceptible, shuddered at her unselfish adhesion to the only means by which that child could be kept in ignorance.

However, she was clear about one thing. She would apologize in prayer; but she would go to hell rather than have Sally made miserable. Thus it came about that Mrs. Fenwick continued a very devout church-goer, and, as her husband never left her side when he had a choice, he, too, became a frequent guest of St. Satisfax, whom he seemed to regard as a harmless though fantastic person who lived in some century or other, only you always forgot which.

His familiarity with the usages of the reformed St. Satisfax, and his power of discriminating the lapses of that saint towards the vices of his early unregenerate days—he being all the while perfectly unconscious how he came to know anything of either—continued to perplex his wife, and was a source of lasting bewilderment to Sally. A particular incident growing out of this was always associated in Rosalind's mind with an epithet he then applied to Sally for the first time, but which afterwards grew to be habitual with him.

"Of course, it's the Communion-table," he said in connexion with some discussion of church furniture. "We have no altars in our church nowadays. You're a Papist, Sarah!"

"I thought Communion-tables were an Evangelical start," said Sally irreverently. "A Low Church turn-out. Our Mr. Prince is a Tractarian, and a Ritualist, and a Puseyite, and an Anglican. That's his game! The Bishop of London won't let him perform High Mass, and *I* think it a shame! Don't you? . . . But I say, Jeremiah!" And Jeremiah refrained from expressing whatever indignation he felt with the Bishop of London, to find what Sally said. It was to the effect that it was incredible that he should know absolutely nothing about the original source of his information.

"I can only tell you, Sarah dear," he said, with the ring of sadness in his voice that always came on this topic, "that I *do* remember nothing of the people who taught me, or the place I learned in. Yet I know about Tract No. 90, and Pusey and Newman, for all that. How I remember things that were information, and forget things that were things, is more than I can tell you. But can't you think of bits of history you know quite well, without ever recalling where you got them from?"

"Of course I can. At least, I could if I knew some history. Only I don't. Oh yes, I do. Perkin Warbeck and Anne of Cleves. I've forgotten about them now, only I know I knew them both. I've answered about them in examinations. They're history all right enough. As to who taught me about them, couldn't say!"

"Very well, Sarah. Now put a good deal of side into your stroke, and you'll arrive at me."

But the revival of the old question had dug up discomfort his mind had done its best to inter; and he went silent and sat with a half-made cigarette in his fingers thinking gravely. Rosalind, at a writing-table behind him, moved her lips at Sally to convey an injunction. Sally, quickly apprehensive, understood it as "Let him alone! Don't rake up the electrocution!" But Sally's native directness betrayed her, and before she had time to think, she had said, "All right; I won't." The consequence of which was that Fenwick—being, as Sally afterwards phrased it, "too sharp by half"—looked up suddenly from his reverie, and said, as he finished rolling his cigarette, "What won't our daughter?"

The pleasure that struck through his wife's heart was audible

in her voice as she caught it up. "Our daughter won't be a silly inquisitive little puss-cat, darling. It only worries you, and does no good." And he replied to her, as she came behind him and stood with an appreciative side-face against his, with a semi-apology for the phrase "daughter," and allowed the rest of what they were speaking of to lapse.

"I called her it for the pleasure of saying it," said he. "It sounded so nice!" And then he knew that her kiss was approval, but of course had no conception of its thoroughness. For her part, she hardly dared to think of the strangeness of the position; she could only rejoice at its outcome.

After that it became so natural to him to speak of Sally as "our daughter" that often enough new acquaintances misconceived her relation to him, and had a shrewd insight that Mr. and Mrs. Fenwick must have been married very young. Once some visitors—a lady with one married daughter and two single ones—were so powerfully impressed with Sally's resemblance to her supposed parent that three-fourths of them went unconvinced away, in spite of the efforts of the whole household to remove the error. The odd fourth was supposed to have carried away corrective information. "I got the flat one, with the elbows, in a quiet corner," said Sally, "and told her Jeremiah was only step. Because they all shouted at once, so it was impossible to make them hear in a lump."

Mistakes of this sort, occurring frequently, reacted on Mr. and Mrs. Fenwick, who found in them a constant support and justification for the theory that Sally was really the daughter of both, while admitting intellectual rejection of it to be plausible to commonplace minds. They themselves got on a higher level, where *ex-post-facto* parentages were possible. Causes might have miscarried, but results having turned out all right, it would never do to be too critical about antecedents. Anyhow, Sally was *going to be* our daughter, whether she *was* or not.

Rosalind always found a curious consolation in the reflection that, however bewildering the position might be, she had it all to herself. This was entirely apart from her desire to keep Fenwick in ignorance of his past; that was merely a necessity for his own sake and Sally's, while this related to the painfulness of standing face to face with an incredible conjunction of surroundings. She, if alone, could take refuge in wonder-struck silence. If her knowledge were shared with another, how could examination and analysis be avoided? And these would involve the resurrection of what she could keep underground as long as she was by herself; backed by a thought, if needed, of the merry eyebrows and pearly teeth, and sweet, soft youth, of its unconscious result. But to be obliged to review and speculate over what she desired to forget, and was helped to forget by gratitude for its consequences, would have been a needless addition to the burden she had already to bear.

The only person she could get any consolation from talking with was the Major, who already knew, or nearly knew, the particulars of the nightmare of twenty years ago. But, then—we feel that we are repeating this *ad nauseam*—he was quite in the dark about Fenwick's identity, and was to be kept there. Rosalind had decided it so, and she may have been right.

Would she have done better by forcing on her husband the knowledge of his own identity, and risking the shock to her daughter of hearing the story of her outsider father's sin against her mother? Her decision against this course was always emphasized by—may even have been unconsciously due to—her prevision of the difficulty of the communication to Sally. How should she set about it? She pictured various forms of the attempt to herself, and found none she did not shudder at.

The knowledge that such things could be would spoil the whole world for the girl. She had to confess to herself that the customary paltering with the meaning of words that enables modern novels to be written about the damnedest things in the universe would either leave her mind uninformed, or call for a commentary—a rubric in the reddest of red letters. Even a resort to the brutal force of Oriental speech done into Jacobean English would be of little avail. For hypocrisy is at work all through juvenile reception of Holy Writ, and brings out as a result the idea that that writ is holy because it uses coarse language about things that hardly call for it. It Bowdlerises Potiphar's wife, and favours the impression that in Sodom and Gomorrah the inhabitants were dissipated and sat up late. This sort of thing wouldn't work with Sally. If the story were to be told at all, her thunderbolt directness would have it all out, down to the

ground. Her mother went through the *pros* and *cons* again and again, and always came to the same conclusion—silence.

But for all that, Rosalind had a background belief that a time would come when a complete revelation would be possible. Her mind stipulated for a wider experience for Sally before then. It would be so infinitely easier to tell her tale to one who had herself arrived at the goal of motherhood, utterly unlike as (so she took for granted) was to be the way of her arrival, sunlit and soft to tread, from the black precipice and thorny wastes that had brought her to her own.

Any possible marriage of Sally's, however, was a vague abstraction of an indistinct future. Perhaps we should say *had been,* and admit that since her own marriage Mrs. Fenwick had begun to be more distinctly aware that her little daughter was now within a negligible period of the age when her own tree of happiness in life had been so curtly broken off short, and no new leafage suffered to sprout upon the broken stem. This identity of age could not but cause comparison of lots. "Suppose it had been Sally!" was the thought that would sometimes spring on her mother's mind; and then the girl would wonder what mamma was thinking of that she should make her arm that was round her tighten as though she feared to lose her, or bring her an irrelevant, unanticipated kiss.

This landmark-period bristled with suggested questions of what was to follow it. Sally would marry—that seemed inevitable; and her mother, now that she was herself married again, did not shrink from the idea as she had done, in spite of her protests against her own selfishness.

Miss Sally's attitude toward the tender passion did not at present give any grounds for supposing that she was secretly its victim, or ever would be. Intense amusement at the perturbation she occasioned to sensitive young gentlemen seemed to be the nearest approach to reciprocating their sentiments that she held out any hopes of. She admitted as a pure abstraction that it was possible to be in love, but regarded applicants as obstacles that stood in their own way.

"I'm sure his adoration does him great credit," she said to Lætitia one day about a new devotee—for there was no lack of them. "But it's his eyes, and his nose, and his mouth, and his

chin, and his ears, and his hair, and his hands and his feet, and his altogether that——"

"That what?" asked her friend.

"That you can't expect a girl to then, if you insist upon it."

"Some girl will, you'll see, one of these days."

"What!—even that man with teeth!" This was some chance acquaintance, useful for illustration, but not in the story. Lætitia knew enough of him to give a testimonial.

"He's a very good fellow, whatever you may say!" said she.

"My dear Tishy! Goodness is the distinguishing feature of the opposite sex. I speak as a person of my own. Men's moral qualities are always high. If it wasn't for their appearance, and their manners, and their defective intelligences, they would make the most charming husbands."

"How very young you are!" Miss Wilson said, superior experience oozing out at every pore. Sally might have passed this by, but when it came to patting you on the cheek, she drew a line.

"Tishy dear, do you mean to go on like that, when I'm a hundred and you are a hundred and five?"

"Yes, dear. At least, I can't say. Anything may have happened by then."

"What sort of thing? Come, Tishy, don't be enigmatical. For instance?"

"You'll change your mind and be wiser—you'll see." Which might have been consecutive in another conversation. But it was insufferably patronizing in Lætitia to evade the centenarian forecast that should have come in naturally, and retreat into a vague abstraction, managing to make it appear (Sally couldn't say how or why) that her own general remarks about man, which meant nothing, were a formal proclamation of celibacy on her part. It is odd how little the mere wording of a conversation may convey, especially girl's conversation. What *is* there in the above to warrant what came next from Sally?

"If you mean Dr. Vereker, that's ridiculous."

"I never mentioned his name, dear."

"Of course you didn't; you couldn't have, and wouldn't have. But anybody could tell what you meant, just the same, by leaving your mouth open when you'd done speaking." We con-

fess freely that we should not have known, but what are we? Why *should* Lætitia's having left her lips slightly ajar, instead of closing them, have "meant Dr. Vereker"?

But the fact is—to quote an expression of Sally's own—brain-waves were the rule and not the exception with her. And hypnotic suggestion raged as between her and Miss Lætitia Wilson, interrupting practice, and involving the performers in wide-ranging, irrelevant discussion. It was on a musical occasion at Ladbroke Grove Road that this conversation took place.

Lætitia wasn't going to deny Dr. Vereker, evidently, or else there really was something very engrossing about her G string. Sally went on, while she dog's-eared her music, which was new, to get good turning-over advantages when it came to playing.

"My medical adviser's not bad, taken as an aunt. I don't quite know what I should do without poor Prosy. But as for anything, of course that's absurd. Why, half the fun is that there *isn't* anything!"

Lætitia knew as well as possible that her young friend, once started, would develop the subject on her own lines without further help from her. She furnished her face with a faint expression of amused waiting, not strong enough to be indictable, but operative, and said never a word.

"Foolery would spoil it all," pursued Sally; "in fact, I put my foot down at the first go-off. I pointed out that I stipulated to be considered a chap. Prosy showed tact—I must say that for Prosy—distinctly tact. You see, if I had had to say a single word to him on the subject, it would have been all up." Then possibly, in response to a threat of an inflexion in her friend's waiting countenance, "I should say, when I make use of the expression 'pointed out,' perhaps I ought to say 'conveyed to him.'" Sally gets the viola in place for a start, and asks is her friend ready? Waiting, it seems; so she merely adds, "Yes, I should say conveyed it to him." And off they go with the new piece of music in B flat, and are soon involved in terrifying complications which have to be done all over again. At the end, they are ungrateful to B flat, and say they don't care much for it; it will be better when they can play it, however. Then Lætitia schemes to wind Sally up a little.

"Doesn't the Goody goozle at you about him, though? You said she did."

"The Goody—oh yes! (By-the-bye, mother says I mustn't call your ma Goody Wilson, or I shall do it to her face, and there'll be a pretty how-do-you-do.) Prosy's parent broods over one, and gloats as if one was crumpets; but Prosy himself is very good about her—aware of her shortcomings."

"I don't care what you call *my* mother. Call her any name you like. But what does Dr. Vereker say?"

"About his'n? Says she's a dear good mother, and I mustn't mind her. I say, Tishy!"

"What, dear?"

"What *is* the present position of the row? You said your mother. You know you did—coming from the bath—after Henriette went away."

"I did say my mother, dear. But I wish it were otherwise. I've told Mr. Bradshaw so."

"You'd be much nicer if you said Julius. Told him what?"

"Told him a girl can't run counter to the wishes of her family in practice. Of course, M—well, then, Julius, if you will have it—is ready to wait. But it's really ridiculous to talk in this way, when, after all, nothing's been said."

"*Has* nothing?"

"Not *to* anybody. Only him and me."

"At Riverfordhook?"

"Why, yes, what I told you. We needn't go over it again."

"In the avenue. And moonrise and things. What o'clock was it, please, ma'am?"

"About ten-fifteen, dear. We were in by eleven." This was a faint attempt to help dignity by a parade of accuracy in figures, and an affectation of effrontery. "But really we needn't go over it again. You know what a nice letter he wrote Aunt Frances?" And instead of waiting for an answer, Tishy, perhaps to avoid catechism about the moonrise and things, ploughs straight on into a recitation of her lover's letter to her aunt: "Dear Lady Sales—Of course it will (quite literally) give me the *greatest possible* pleasure to come. I will bring the Strad"; and then afterwards he said: "I hope your niece will give a full account of me, and not draw any veils over my social position. How-

ever, this being written at my desk here on the shop-paper will prevent any misunderstanding."

"Your Aunt Frances has been hatching you—you two!" says Sally, ignoring the letter.

"She is a dear good woman, if ever there was one. I wish mamma was my aunt-by-marriage, and she her!" And then Lætitia went on to tell many things about the present position of the "row" between herself and her mother, concerning which it can only be said that nothing transpired that justified its existence. Seeing that no recognition was asked for of any formal engagement either by the "young haberdasher" himself —for that was the epithet applied to him (behind his back, of course) by the older lady—or by the object of his ambitious aspirations, it might have been more politic, as well as more graceful, on her part, to leave the affair to die down, as love-affairs unopposed are so very apt to do. Instead of which she needs must begin endeavouring to frustrate what at the time of her first interference was the merest flirtation between a Romeo who was tied to a desk all day, and a Juliet who was constantly coming into contact with other potential Romeos—plenty of them. Our own private opinion is that if the Montagus and Capulets had tried to bury the hatchet at a public betrothal of the two young people, the latter would have quarrelled on the spot. Setting their family circles by the ears again would almost have been as much fun as a secret wedding by a friar. You doubt it? Well, we may be wrong. But we are quite certain that the events which followed shortly after the chat between the two girls recorded above either would never have come to pass, or would have taken an entirely different form, if it had not been for the uncompromising character of Mrs. Sales Wilson's attitude towards her daughter's Romeo.

We will give this collateral incident in our history a chapter to itself, for your convenience more than our own. You can skip it, you see, if you want to get back to Krakatoa Villa.

CHAPTER XXI

OF JULIUS BRADSHAW'S INNER SOUL. AND OF THE HABERDASHER'S BATTLE AT LADBROKE GROVE ROAD. ON CARPET STRETCHING, AND VACCINATION FROM THE CALF. AN AFTER-DINNER INTERVIEW, AND GOOD RESOLUTIONS. EVASIVE TRAPPISTS

You can remember, if you are male and middle-aged, or worse, some little incident in your own early life more or less like that effervescence of unreal passion which made us first acquainted with Mr. Julius Bradshaw and his violin. Do you shake your head, and deny it? Are you prepared to look us in the face, and swear you never, when a young man, had a sleepless night because of some girl whom you had scarcely spoken to, and who would not have known who you were if you had been able to master your trepidation and claim acquaintance; and who, in the sequel, changed her identity, and became what the greatest word-coiner of our time called a "speech-friend" of yours, without a scrap of romance or tenderness in the friendship?

Sally's sudden change of identity from the bewitching little gardener who had fascinated this susceptible youth, to a merely uncommonly nice girl, was no doubt assisted by his introduction just at that moment to the present Mrs. Julius Bradshaw. For it would be the merest affectation to conceal the ultimate outcome of their acquaintance.

When Julius came to Krakatoa Villa, he came already half disillusioned about Sally. What sort of an *accolade* he expected on arriving to keep his passion on its legs, Heaven only knows! He certainly had been chilled by her easy-going invitation to her mother's. A definite declaration of callous indifference would not have been half so effective. Sally had the most extraordinary power of pointing out that she stipulated to be considered as a chap; or conveying it, which came to the same thing. On the other hand, Lætitia, who had been freely spoken of by Sally as "making a great ass of herself about social tommy-rot