heard anything of the dear Professor since he left.

'Delightful genius,' she added enthusiastically.

'Yes,' I said.

'I suppose he and his wife will go back to Bonn now?'

'Soon, I hope.'

'Did you say he had gone to Berlin? Is he there now?'

'No, he isn't.'

'Have you seen him again?'

'Yes; he came back to Stubbenkammer.'

'Indeed? With his wife?'

'No; Charlotte was not with him.'

'Indeed?'

Never was a more expressive Indeed.

'My cousin changed her plans about Berlin,' I said hastily, disturbed by this expressiveness, 'and came back too. But she didn't care for Stubbenkammer. She is waiting for me — for us — at Wiek. She is waiting there till I — till we come.'

'Oh really? And the Professor?'

'The Professor goes to Wiek, too, of course.'

Mrs. Harvey-Browne gazed at me a moment as though endeavouring to arrange her thoughts. 'Do forgive me,' she said, 'for seeming stupid, but I don't quite understand where the Professor is. He was at Stubbenkammer, and he will be at Wiek; but where is he now?'

'In there,' I said, with a nod in the direction of the dining-room; and I wished with all my heart that he wasn't.

'In there?' cried the bishop's wife. 'Brosy, do you hear? How very delightful. Let us go to him at once.' And she rustled into the room, followed by Brosy and myself. 'You go first, dear Frau X.,' she turned round to say, daunted by the clouds of smoke, and all the chairs and people who had to be got out of the way; for by this time the tourists had finished dining, and had pushed their chairs out into the room to talk together more conveniently, and the room was dim with smoke. 'You know where he is. I can't tell you how charmed I am; really most fortunate. He seems to be with an English friend,' she added, for the revellers, having paused in their din to stare at us, the Professor's cheery voice was distinctly heard inquiring in English of some person or persons unseen whether they knew the difference between a canary and a grand piano.

'Always in such genial spirits,' murmured Mrs. Harvey-Browne rapturously.

Here there was a great obstruction, a group of people blocking the passage down the room and having to be got out of the way before we could pass; and when the scraping of their chairs and their grumbles had ceased we caught the Professor's conversation a little farther on. He was saying, 'I cannot in that case, my dear young lady, caution you with a sufficient earnestness to be of an extreme care when purchasing a grand piano ——'

'I don't ever think of doing such a thing,' interrupted a shrill female voice, at whose sound Mrs. Harvey-Browne made an exclamation.

'Tut, tut. I am putting a case. Suppose you wished to purchase a grand piano, and did not know, as you say you do not, the difference between it——'

'I shan't wish, though. I'd be a nice silly to.'

'Nay, but suppose you did wish——'

'What's the good of supposing silly things like that? You *are* a funny old man.'

'Andrews?' said Mrs. Harvey-Browne, at this point emerging on the absorbed couple, and speaking with a languid gentleness that curled slightly upwards into an interrogation at the end.

Andrews, whose face had been overspread by the expression that accompanies titters, started to her feet and froze before our eyes into the dumb passivity of the decent maid. The Professor hardly gave himself time to bow and kiss Mrs. Harvey-Browne's hand before he poured forth his pleasure that this charming young lady should be of her party. 'Your daughter, madam, I doubt not?'

'My maid,' said Mrs. Harvey-Browne, in a curdled kind of voice. 'Andrews, please see about the luggage. She *is* rather a nice-looking girl, I suppose,' she conceded, anxious to approve of all the Professor said and did.

'Nice-looking? She is so exceedingly pretty, madam, that I could only conclude she must be your daughter.'

This elementary application of balm at once soothed Mrs. Harvey-Browne into a radiance of smiles perplexing in conjunction with her age and

supposed superiority to vanities. Forgetful of her objections to German crowds and smoke she sat down in the chair vacated by Andrews, made the Professor sit down again in his, and plunged into an exuberant conversation, which began by an invitation so warm that it almost seemed on fire to visit herself and the bishop before the summer was over in the episcopal glories of Babbacombe. This much I heard as I slipped away into the peace of the front room. Brosy came after me. To him the picture of the Professor being wrapped about in Mrs. Harvey-Browne's amenities was manifestly displeasing.

The front room seemed very calm and spacious after what we had just been in. A few fishermen were drinking beer at the bar; in a corner sat Andrews and Gertrud, beginning a necessarily inarticulate acquaintance over the hold-alls; both window and door were open, and the rain came down straight and steady, filling the place with a soft murmuring and dampness. Across the clearness of my first decision that the Professor must be an absolutely delightful person to be always with, had crept a slight film of doubt. There were some things about him that might possibly, I began in a dim way to see, annoy a wife. He seemed to love Charlotte, and he had seemed to be very fond of me — anyhow, never before had I been so much patted in so short a space of time. Yet the moment he caught sight of the Alsatian bow he forgot my presence and existence, forgot the fluster he had been in to get on after his wife,

and attached himself to it with a vehemence that no one could be expected to like. A shadowy conviction began to pervade my mind that the sooner I handed him over to Charlotte and drove on again alone the better. Surely Charlotte *ought* to go back to him and look after him; why should I be obliged to drive round Rügen first with one Nieberlein and then with the other?

'The ways of Fate are truly eccentric,' I remarked, half to myself, going to the door and gazing out into the wet.

'Because they have led you to Arkona on a rainy day?' asked Brosy.

'Because of that and because of heaps of other things,' I said; and sitting down at a table on which lay a bulky tome with much-thumbed covers, I began rather impatiently to turn over its pages.

But I had not yet reached the limits of what Fate can and will do to a harmless woman who only asks to be left unnoticed; for while Brosy and I were studying this book, which is an ancient visitor's book of 1843 kept by the landlord's father or grandfather, I forget which, and quite the best thing Arkona possesses, so that I advise the traveller, whose welfare I do my best at intervals to promote, not to leave Arkona without having seen it, — while, I say, we were studying this book, admiring many of its sketches, laughing over the inevitable ineptitudes that seem to drop with so surprising a facility from the pens of persons who inscribe their names, examining with

awe the signatures of celebrated men who came here before they were celebrated, — Bismarck's as assessor in 1843, Caprivi's as lieutenant, Waldersee's also as lieutenant, and others of the kind, — while, I repeat, we were innocently studying this book, Fate was busy tucking up her sleeves preparing to hit me harder than ever.

'It was not Fate,' interrupted the wise relative before alluded to, as I sat after my return recounting my adventures and trying to extract sympathy, 'it was the first consequence of your having meddled. If you had not ——'

Well, well. The great comfort about relatives is that though they may make what assertions they like you need not and do not believe them; and it was Fate and nothing but Fate that had dogged me malevolently all round Rügen and joined me here at Arkona once more to Mrs. Harvey-Browne. In she came while we were bending over the book, followed by the Professor, who walked as a man may walk in a dream, his eyes fixed on nothing, and asked me without more ado whether I would let her share my carriage as far as Wiek.

'Then, you see, dear Frau X., I shall get there,' she observed.

'But why do you want to get there?' I asked, absolutely knocked over this time by the fists of Fate.

'Oh why not? We must go somewhere, and quite the most natural thing to do is to join forces. You agree, don't you, Brosy dear? The Professor thinks it an excellent plan, and is charm-

ing enough to want to relinquish his seat to me if you will have me, are you not, Professor? However I only ask to be allowed to sit on the small seat, for the last thing I wish to do is to disturb anybody. But I fear the Professor will not allow ——' and she stopped and looked with arch pleasantness at the Professor who murmured abstractedly 'Certainly, certainly' — which, of course, might mean anything.

'My dear mother ——' began Brosy in a tone of strong remonstrance.

'Oh I'm sure it is the best thing we can do, Brosy. I did ask the landlord about hiring a fly, and there is no such thing. It will only be as far as Wiek, and I hear that is not so very far. You don't mind do you, dear Frau X.?'

'Mind?' I cried, wriggling out a smile, 'mind? But how will your son —— I don't quite see — and your maid?'

'Oh Brosy has his bicycle, and if you'll let the luggage be put in your luggage cart Andrews can quite well sit beside your maid. Of course we will share expenses, so that it will really be mutually advantageous.'

Mrs. Harvey-Browne being one of those few persons who know exactly what they want, did as she chose with wavering creatures like myself. She also did as she chose with Brosy, because the impossibility of publicly rebuking one's mother shut his mouth. She even did as she chose with the Professor, who, declaring that sooner than incommode the ladies he would go in the luggage

cart, was in the very act as we were preparing to start off of nimbly climbing on to the trunk next to the one on which Andrews sat, when he found himself hesitating, coming down again, getting into the victoria, subsiding on to the little seat, and all in obedience to a clear something in the voice of Mrs. Harvey-Browne.

Never did unhappy celebrity sit more wretchedly than the poor Professor. It was raining so hard that we were obliged to have the hood up, and its edge came to within an inch of his nose — would have touched it quite if he had not sat as straight and as far back as possible. He could not, therefore, put up his umbrella, and was reduced, while water trickled ceaselessly off the hood down his neck, to pretending with great heroism that he was perfectly comfortable. It was impossible to sit under the snug hood and contemplate the drenched Professor outside it. It was impossible to let an old man of seventy, and an old man, besides, of such immense European value, catch his death before my very eyes. Either he must come between us and be what is known as bodkin, or some one must get out and walk; and the bodkin solution not commending itself to me it was plain that if some one walked it must be myself.

In an instant the carriage was stopped, protestations filled the air, I got out, the Professor was transferred to my place, the bishop's wife turned deaf ears to his entreaties that he might go in the luggage cart and hold his big umbrella over

the two poor drowning maids, the hood became vocal with arguments, suggestions, expostulations, apologies — and 'Go on, August,' I interrupted; and dropped behind into sand and silence.

We were already beyond Putgarten, in a flat, uninteresting country of deep sand and treeless, hedgeless cornfields. I had no umbrella, but a cloak with a hood to it which I drew over my head, throwing Gertrud my hat when she too presently heaved past in a cloud of expostulations. 'Go on, go on,' I called to the driver with a wave of my hand seeing him hesitate; and then stood waiting for Brosy who was some little way behind pushing his bicycle dismally through the sand, meditating no doubt on the immense difficulties of dealing with mothers who do things one does not like. When he realised that the solitary figure with the peaked hood outlined against the sullen grey background was mine he pushed along at a trot, with a face of great distress. But I had no difficulty in looking happy and assuring him that I liked walking, because I really was thankful to get away from the bishop's wife, and I rather liked, besides, to be able to stretch myself thoroughly; while as for getting wet, to let oneself slowly be soaked to the skin while walking in a warm rain has a charm all its own.

Accordingly, after the preliminary explanations, we plodded along comfortably enough towards Wiek, keeping the carriage in sight as much as possible, and talking about all the things that interested Brosy, which were mostly things of

great obscurity to myself. I suppose he thought it safest to keep to high truths and generalities, fearing lest the conversation in dropping to an everyday level should also drop on to the Nieberleins, and he seemed quite anxious not to know why Charlotte was at Wiek by herself while her husband and I were driving together without her. Therefore he soared carefully in realms of pure reason, and I, silent and respectful, watched him from below; only I could not help comparing the exalted vagueness of his talk with the sharp clearness of all that the old and wise Professor said.

Wiek after all turned out to be hardly more than five miles from Arkona, but it was heavy going. What with the bicycle and my wet skirts and the high talk we got along slowly, and my soul grew more chilled with every step by the thought of the complications the presence of the Harvey-Brownes was going to make in the delicate task of persuading Charlotte to return to her husband.

Brosy knew very well that there was something unusual in the Nieberlein relations, and was plainly uneasy at being thrust into a family meeting. When the red roofs and poplars of Wiek came in sight he sank into thoughtfulness, and we walked the last mile in our heavy, sand-caked shoes in almost total silence. The carriage and cart had disappeared long ago, urged on, no doubt, by the Professor's eagerness to get to Charlotte and away from Mrs. Harvey-Browne, and we

were quite near the first cottages when August appeared coming back to fetch us, driving very fast, with Gertrud's face peering anxiously round the hood. It was only a few yards from there to the open space in the middle of the village in which the two inns are, and Brosy got on his bicycle while I drove with Gertrud, wrapped in all the rugs she could muster.

There are two inns at Wiek, and one is the best. The Professor had gone to each to inquire for his wife, and I found him striding about in front of the one that is the best, and I saw at once by the very hang of his cloak and position of his hat that Charlotte was not there.

'Gone! gone!' he cried, before the carriage stopped even. 'Gone this very day — this very morning, gone at eight, at the self-same hour we wasted over those accursèd flounders. Is it not sufficient to make a poor husband become mad? After months of patience? To miss her everywhere by a few miserable hours? I told thee, I begged thee, to bring me on last night ——'

Brosy, now of a quite deadly anxiety to keep out of Nieberlein complications, removed himself and his bicycle with all possible speed. Mrs. Harvey-Browne, watching my arrival from an upper window, waved a genial hand with ill-timed cordiality whenever I looked her way. The landlord and his wife carried in all the rugs that dropped off me unheeded into the mud when I got out, and did not visibly turn a hair at my peaked hood and draggled garments.

'Where has she gone?' I asked, as soon as I could get the Professor to keep still and listen. 'We'll drive after her the first thing to-morrow morning — to-night if you like ——'

'Drive after her? Last night, when it would have availed, thou wouldest not drive after her. Now, if we follow her, we must swim. She has gone to an island — an island, I tell thee, of which I never till this day heard — an island to reach which requires much wind from a favourable quarter — which without wind is not to be reached at all — and in me thou now beholdest a broken-hearted man.'