

"This is a fine house," I said, addressing the young girl. "You would hardly be willing to exchange it for a cottage, would you?"

"After one has lived a while with rich people," she answered, "one learns that it makes little difference whether the floor is bare or covered with a rich carpet, so far as happiness is concerned. The principal thing is to live a quiet life and to keep a clean conscience."

Her words affected me so strongly that I dropped my tools, and a mist came over my eyes. She laughed and said that I was not very skilful at my trade.

At last I succeeded in opening the casket, and my eyes were dazzled by the sight of a diamond necklace sparkling upon the blue velvet lining. Catherine advanced to the door, and called Mr Menninger, who came in immediately, but scarcely had he looked at the diamonds, when he seized me roughly by the arm, exclaiming: "There is a brooch missing—a brooch that contained the most valuable stones in the set!"

Notwithstanding my innocence, I shook like an aspen leaf. Perhaps this was only a snare to entrap me. They had found out my secret, and I was to be arrested and probably put into prison. I was about to fall upon my knees and beg for mercy when Catherine's voice roused me to defend myself.

"What!" she exclaimed. "How can you imagine such a thing possible? I have not left the room since he came."

"Be quiet!" said the councillor. "We will examine you, too. Stay where you are."

He then called his wife and told her that he had intended to present her with the diamonds, which were his mother's, as a gift, and that he had just discovered that the brooch was missing. Turning to me, he said:

"You can appeal to the law if you wish. Otherwise I will search you myself, while my wife examines Catherine."

"What!" exclaimed the astonished girl. "Do you suspect me?"

The sight of her distress made me so indignant that I abandoned my determination to confess everything about my bank book to the councillor, and submit quietly to the humiliation of an examination. My mind was filled with anger and a thirst for revenge. It seemed to me that I had sunk to the level of a slave, and my own fault seemed venial in comparison with this cruel outrage, especially when I saw Catherine suffering through me from the same odious suspicions.

Of course the search was in vain. Nothing was found upon my person nor upon Catherine's. As I left the room I said to her:

"Be patient! I will try to repay you for what you have had to endure on my account."

I went into the street almost blind with rage. The lamps were lighted all over the city, which was gay with sights and sounds of Christmas. But in my own heart all was dark and cold. Julius seemed rather to enjoy the recital of my wrongs.

"You see now, my friend, how poor wretches like ourselves are treated by the rich," he said exultingly. "What do they care for our feelings? After this I hope you will be less scrupulous about helping yourself to whatever comes in your way."

Some months later, while I was at my work in the shop one day, Catherine entered with a padlock in her hand, and requested me to fit a key to it and bring it to the councillor's. When I went on my errand Catherine was washing off the front steps. She stopped to shake hands with me, saying:

"I have good news for you. My master received a letter this morning from his sister, telling him that she had kept the brooch herself, but would send it without delay, and that she regretted the disappointment to him."

"Why did he not let me know it at once?" I asked.

"It was his intention to do so," answered Catherine "but he desires me to say to you that you are now completely cleared of the charge."

It was now the month of May, and I decided to go to the building in which the bank was established, and present my receipts. Julius urged me not to delay longer, and my scruples had vanished by this time. When I entered the office Mr Menninger was examining accounts. My first feeling of alarm at the thought of what I was about to do subsided as I looked at him and remembered all he had made me suffer.

I waited a few moments before I presented my book. He examined it carefully. No one was in the room but ourselves, and the only sound to be heard was the monotonous ticking of the clock on the mantel. My heart beat violently and a cold sweat covered my brow. At last he opened the cash box.

"You have a considerable sum," he said. "Will you have it in silver or bank notes?"

"In bank notes," I replied.

He handed me over a roll of bills and asked me to count them over while he made up the balance in coin. I could scarcely hold them. Then he laid several gold pieces upon the desk, and looking at me attentively, asked:

"Are you not the young apprentice that came to my house on Christmas Eve?"

"Yes sir," I answered.

"I am truly glad to see you again," he said, "I often reproached myself for not having sought you and asked your pardon for my injustice. You must have felt it acutely. I beg that you will forgive me, and if I can ever serve you in any way do not hesitate to let me know. But what is the matter? Are you ill?"

I can never describe what I suffered while he was speaking. There I stood, grasping the roll of bills convulsively and staring at the gold pieces before me. I had never before touched so much money. The temptation was strong to resist the voice of conscience and go away with my prize. But when I looked into the face of the man who had so nobly confessed his own error, and who had made me such a generous offer of assistance, I was completely vanquished. I fell upon my knees, crying out:

"No! I am a miserable impostor! Take back your money!"

Then I confessed everything.

The councillor had a noble heart. He saw that my grief was sincere, and assured me that my secret was in safe keeping. But he insisted upon having Julius arrested and said that he must leave Munich at once. It is not necessary to add that I destroyed my receipt before leaving the savings bank.

Mr Menninger proved a valuable friend. He lent me a sum of money sufficient to enable me to go into business on my own account, and a few years later I attained success.

## TRAVELLING ALONE.

"I FEEL very uncomfortable about letting you travel alone," said Mr A—, as he put his sponse on the northward bound train at C—.

"Why, I have done it over and over again," said his wife, languidly. She was a tall, fair woman, whose pretty face bore traces of recent illness, and, as she spoke, she passed her delicate hand, laden with costly rings, over her forehead.

"It is too vexatious, too," continued her husband, noting anxiously the gesture, "that every seat in the drawing-room car is taken. Don't you think I had better ask the conductor to look after you?"

"No, please don't, Jack," answered his wife; "he would only worry me. I shall be comfortable enough, and, after all, it is only six hours ride before I arrive at B—, where I will meet the B—, Good-bye dear, and don't fret; I will wire you this evening."

After her husband left, Mrs A— gave a careless look at her fellow-passengers. In the seat across the aisle, sat a respectable-looking, ruddy-faced woman whom the invalid regarded with satisfaction. A man and woman, with a family of several children, occupied the place near the door; the rest of the car seemed empty, but, as her eyes followed the line of seats, she felt a disagreeable start on finding her gaze met by the bold, direct stare of a well-dressed, sinister-looking man who occupied the third seat in the rear. By his side sat a burly-looking giant, who, although cleanly dressed, was evidently of an inferior class. Disagreeably impressed, she knew not why, she turned around, and, opening her book, endeavoured to beguile the tedium of her journey.

After a couple of hours the express stopped at —, and here, to her regret, she saw her kind-looking neighbour leave her seat. The family party that she noticed also hurried past with children and bundles, pushing past the new people who were coming in, and it was with a feeling of positive annoyance that she saw the two men behind her leave their place, and quietly take possession of the seats the pleasant-faced woman had left vacant.

Again the train sped on. Mrs A— felt quite vexed with herself on account of the uneasy, nervous feeling that gradually stole over her, and the half dread she felt of the dark, Mephistophelian-looking man who had placed himself so near her. Several times she looked towards him, feeling instinctively that his eyes were fixed upon her, and each time she never failed to find the bold and glittering orbs staring into her face.

"How absurd I am," she said to herself, impatiently; "what harm could anyone do me in a car full of people?" and she resolutely turned her back and began to read.

But suddenly she gave a violent start and a half scream as she felt, rather than saw, the dreaded face bending over her shoulder, while he said: "We get out at the next station, madam."

Just at that moment the welcome sound of 'tickets?' was heard from the conductor, who was making his rounds before the train stopped. The man, to her great relief, left her immediately, but, to her surprise, walked up to the official, and, drawing him aside, engaged him in earnest conversation. In spite of herself, she could not help turning around to see what her persecutor was about, although she devoutly hoped to see him leave the train, thus making it unnecessary to take any notice of his behaviour. That they were talking about her was evident, for the conductor kept glancing