

DELIA BLANCHFLOWER

Chapter I

"Not a Britisher to be seen—or scarcely! Well, I can do without 'em for a bit!"

And the Englishman whose mind shaped these words continued his leisurely survey of the crowded salon of a Tyrolese hotel, into which a dining-room like a college hall had just emptied itself after the mid-day meal. Meanwhile a German, sitting near, seeing that his tall neighbour had been searching his pockets in vain for matches, offered some. The Englishman's quick smile in response modified the German's general opinion of English manners, and the two exchanged some remarks on the weather—a thunder shower was splashing outside—remarks which bore witness at least to the Englishman's courage in using such knowledge of the German tongue as he possessed. Then, smoking contentedly, he leant against the wall behind him, still looking on.

He saw a large room, some seventy feet long, filled with a miscellaneous foreign crowd—South Germans, Austrians, Russians, Italians—seated in groups round small tables, smoking, playing cards or dominoes, reading the day's newspapers which the funicular had just brought up, or lazily listening to the moderately good band which was playing some Rheingold selection at the farther end.

To his left was a large family circle—Russians, according to information derived from the headwaiter—and among them, a girl, apparently about eighteen, sitting on the edge of the party and absorbed in a novel of which she was eagerly turning the pages. From her face and figure the half savage, or Asiatic note, present in the physiognomy and complexion of her brothers and sisters, was en-

tirely absent. Her beautiful head with its luxuriant mass of black hair, worn low upon the cheek, and coiled in thick plaits behind, reminded the Englishman of a Greek fragment he had admired, not many days before, in the Louvre; her form too was of a classical lightness and perfection. The Englishman noticed indeed that her temper was apparently not equal to her looks. When her small brothers interrupted her, she repelled them with a pettish word or gesture; the English governess addressed her, and got no answer beyond a haughty look; even her mother was scarcely better treated.

Close by, at another table, was another young girl, rather younger than the first, and equally pretty. She too was dark haired, with a delicate oval face and velvet black eyes, but without any of the passionate distinction, the fire and flame of the other. She was German, evidently. She wore a plain white dress with a red sash, and her little feet in white shoes were lightly crossed in front of her. The face and eyes were all alive, it seemed to him, with happiness, with the mere pleasure of life. She could not keep herself still for a moment. Either she was sending laughing signals to an elderly man near her, presumably her father, or chattering at top speed with another girl of her own age, or gathering her whole graceful body into a gesture of delight as the familiar Rheingold music passed from one lovely *motif* to another.

"You dear little thing!" thought the Englishman, with an impulse of tenderness, which passed into foreboding amusement as he compared the pretty creature with some of the matrons sitting near her, with one in particular, a lady of enormous girth, whose achievements in eating and drinking at meals had seemed to him amazing. Almost all the middle-aged women in the hotel were too fat, and had lost their youth thereby, prematurely. Must the fairy herself—Euphrosyne—come to such a muddy vesture in the end? Twenty years hence?—alack!

"Beauty that must die." The hackneyed words came suddenly to mind, and haunted him, as his eyes wandered round the room. Amid many coarse or commonplace types, he yet perceived an unusual number of agreeable or handsome faces; as is indeed generally the case in any Austrian hotel. Faces, some of them, among the very young girls especially, of a rose-tinted fairness, and subtly expres-

sive, the dark brows arching on white foreheads, the features straight and clean, the heads well carried, as though conscious of ancestry and tradition; faces, also, of the *bourgeoisie*, of a simpler, Gretchen-like beauty; faces—a few—of "intellectuals," as he fancied,—including the girl with the novel?—not always handsome, but arresting, and sometimes noble. He felt himself in a border land of races, where the Teutonic and Latin strains had each improved the other; and the pretty young girls and women seemed to him like flowers sprung from an old and rich soil. He found his pleasure in watching them—the pleasure of the Ancient Mariner when he blessed the water-snakes. Sex had little to say to it; and personal desire nothing. Was he not just over forty?—a very busy Englishman, snatching a hard-earned holiday—a bachelor, moreover, whose own story lay far behind him.

"*Beauty that must die*" The words reverberated and would not be dismissed. Was it because he had just been reading an article in a new number of the *Quarterly*, on "Contemporary Feminism," with mingled amazement and revolt, roused by some of the strange facts collected by the writer? So women everywhere—many women at any rate—were turning indiscriminately against the old bonds, the old yokes, affections, servitudes, demanding "self-realisation," freedom for the individuality and the personal will; rebelling against motherhood, and life-long marriage; clamouring for easy divorce, and denouncing their own fathers, brothers and husbands, as either tyrants or fools; casting away the old props and veils; determined, apparently, to know everything, however ugly, and to say everything, however outrageous? He himself was a countryman, an English provincial, with English public school and university traditions of the best kind behind him, a mind steeped in history, and a natural taste for all that was ancient and deep-rooted. The sketch of an emerging generation of women, given in the *Quarterly* article, had made a deep impression upon him. It seemed to him frankly horrible. He was of course well acquainted, though mainly through the newspapers, with English suffragism, moderate and extreme. His own country district and circle were not, however, much concerned with it. And certainly he knew personally no such types as the *Quarterly* article described. Among them, no doubt, were the women who set fire to houses, and violently interrupted or assaulted

Cabinet ministers, who wrote and maintained newspapers that decent people would rather not read, who grasped at martyrdom and had turned evasion of penalty into a science, the continental type, though not as yet involved like their English sisters in a hand-to-hand, or fist-to-fist struggle with law and order, were, it seemed, even more revolutionary in principle, and to some extent in action. The life and opinions of a Sonia Kovalevski left him bewildered. For no man was less omniscient than he. Like the Cabinet minister of recent fame, in the presence of such *femmes fortes*, he might have honestly pleaded, *mutatis mutandis*, "In these things I am a child."

Were these light-limbed, dark-eyed maidens under his eyes touched with this new anarchy? They or their elders must know something about it. There had been a Feminist congress lately at Trient—on the very site, and among the ghosts of the great Council. Well, what could it bring them? Was there anything so brief, so passing, if she did but know it, as a woman's time for happiness? "*Beauty that must die.*"

As the words recurred, some old anguish lying curled at his heart raised its head and struck. He heard a voice—tremulously sweet—"Mark!—dear Mark!—I'm not good enough—but I'll be to you all a woman can."

She had not played with life—or scorned it—or missed it. It was not *her* fault that she must put it from her.

In the midst of the crowd about him, he was no longer aware of it. Still smoking mechanically, his eyelids had fallen over his eyes, as his head rested against the wall.

He was interrupted by a voice which said in excellent though foreign English—

"I beg your pardon, sir—I wonder if I might have that paper you are standing on?"

He looked down astonished, and saw that he was trampling on the day's *New York Herald*, which had fallen from a table near. With many apologies he lifted it, smoothed it out, and presented it to the elderly lady who had asked for it.

She looked at him through her spectacles with a pleasant smile.

"You don't find many English newspapers in these Tyrolese hotels?"

"No; but I provide myself. I get my *Times* from home."

"Then, as an Englishman, you have all you want. But you seem to be without it to-night?"

"It hasn't arrived. So I am reduced, as you see, to listening to the music."

"You are not musical?"

"Well, I don't like this band anyway. It makes too much noise. Don't you think it rather a nuisance?"

"No. It helps these people to talk," she said, in a crisp, cheerful voice, looking round the room.

"But they don't want any help. Most of them talk by nature as fast as the human tongue can go!"

"About nothing!" She shrugged her shoulders.

Winnington observed her more closely. She was, he guessed, somewhere near fifty; her scanty hair was already grey, and her round, plain face was wrinkled and scored like a dried apple. But her eyes, which were dark and singularly bright, expressed both energy and wit; and her mouth, of which the upper lip was caught up a little at one corner, seemed as though quivering with unspoken and, as he thought, sarcastic speech. Was she, perchance, the Swedish *Schriftstellerin* of whom he had heard the porter talking to some of the hotel guests? She looked a lonely-ish, independent sort of body.

"They seem nice, kindly people," he said, glancing round the salon. "And how they enjoy life!"

"You call it life?"

He laughed out.

"You are hard upon them, madame. Now I—being a mere man—am lost in admiration of their good looks. We in England pride

ourselves on our women, But upon my word, it would be difficult to match this show in an English hotel. Look at some of the faces!"

She followed his eyes—indifferently.

"Yes—they've plenty of beauty. And what'll it do for them? Lead them into some wretched marriage or other—and in a couple of years there will be neither beauty nor health, nor self-respect, nor any interest in anything, but money, clothes, and outwitting their husbands."

"You forget the children!"

"Ah—the children"—she said in a dubious tone, shrugging her shoulders again.

The Englishman—whose name was Mark Winnington—suddenly saw light upon her.

A Swedish writer, a woman travelling alone? He remembered the sketch of "feminism" in Sweden which he had just read. The names of certain woman-writers flitted through his mind. He felt a curiosity mixed with distaste. But curiosity prevailed.

He bent forward. And as he came thereby into stronger light from a window on his left, the thought crossed the mind of his neighbour that although so fully aware of other people's good looks, the tall Englishman seemed to be quite unconscious of his own. Yet in truth he appeared both to her, and to the hotel guests in general, a kind of heroic creature. In height he towered beside the young or middle-aged men from Munich, Buda-Pesth, or the north Italian towns, who filled the *salon*. He had all that athlete could desire in the way of shoulders, and lean length of body; a finely-carried head, on which the brown hair was wearing a little thin at the crown, while still irrepressibly strong and curly round the brow and temple; thick penthouse brows, and beneath them a pair of greyish eyes which had already made him friends with the children and the dogs and half the grown-ups in the place. The Swedish lady admitted—but with no cordiality—that human kindness could hardly speak more plainly in a human face than from those eyes. Yet the mouth and chin were thin, strong and determined; so were the hands. The man's whole aspect, moreover, spoke of assured position, and of a keen intelligence free from personal pre-occupations, and keeping a

disinterested outlook on the world. The woman who observed him had in her handbag a book by a Russian lady in which Man, with a capital, figured either as "a great comic baby," or as the "Man-Beast," invented for the torment of women. The gentleman before her seemed a little difficult to fit into either category.

But if she was observing him, he had begun to question her.

"Will you forgive me if I ask an impertinent question?"

"Certainly. They are the only questions worth asking."

He laughed.

"You are, I think, from Sweden?"

"That is my country."

"And I am told you are a writer?" She bent her head. "I can see also that you are—what shall I say?—very critical of your sex—no doubt, still more of mine! I wonder if I may ask"—

He paused, his smiling eyes upon her.

"Ask anything you like."

"Well, there seems to be a great woman-movement in your country. Are you interested in it?"

"You mean—am I a feminist? Yes, I happen to dislike the word; but it describes me. I have been working for years for the advancement of women. I have written about it—and in the Scandinavian countries we have already got a good deal. The vote in Sweden and Norway; almost complete equality with men in Denmark. Professional equality, too, has gone far. We shall get all we want before long?" Her eyes sparkled in her small lined face.

"And you are satisfied?"

"What human being of any intelligence—and I am intelligent," she added, quietly,— "ever confessed to being 'satisfied'? Our shoe pinched us. We have eased it a good deal."

"You really find it substantially better to walk with?"

"Through this uncomfortable world? Certainly. Why not?"

He was silent a little. Then he said, with his pleasant look, throwing his head back to observe her, as though aware he might rouse her antagonism.

"All that seems to me to go such a little way."

"I daresay," she said, indifferently, though it seemed to him that she flushed. "You men have had everything you want for so long, you have lost the sense of value. Now that we want some of your rights, it is your cue to belittle them. And England, of course, is hopelessly behind!" The tone had sharpened.

He laughed again and was about to reply when the band struck up Brahm's Hungarian dances, and talk was hopeless. When the music was over, and the burst of clapping, from all the young folk especially, had died away, the Swedish lady said abruptly –

"But we had an English lady here last year – quite a young girl – very handsome too – who was an even stronger feminist than I."

"Oh, yes, we can produce them – in great numbers. You have only to look at our newspapers."

His companion's upper lip mocked at the remark.

"You don't produce them in great numbers – like the young lady I speak of."

"Ah, she was good-looking?" laughed Winnington. "That, of course, gave her a most unfair advantage."

"A man's jest," said the other dryly – "and an old one. But naturally women take all the advantage they can get – out of anything. They need it. However, this young lady had plenty of other gifts – besides her beauty. She was as strong as most men. She rode, she climbed, she sang. The whole hotel did nothing but watch her. She was the centre of everything. But after a little while she insisted on leaving her father down here to over-eat himself and play cards, while she went with her maid and a black mare that nobody but she wanted to ride, up to the *Jagd-hütte* in the forest. There! – you can see a little blue smoke coming from it now" –

She pointed through the window to the great forest-clothed cliff, some five thousand feet high, which fronted the hotel; and across a

deep valley, just below its topmost point, Mark Winnington saw a puff of smoke mounting into the clear sky.

— "Of course there was a great deal of talk. The men gossiped and the women scoffed. Her father, who adored her and could not control her in the least, shrugged his shoulders, played bridge all day long with an English family, and would sit on the verandah watching the path—that path there—which comes down from the *Jagd-hütte* with a spy-glass. Sometimes she would send him down a letter by one of the Jager's boys, and he would send a reply. And every now and then she would come down—riding—like a Brunhilde, with her hair all blown about her—and her eyes—*Ach, superb!*"

The little dowdy woman threw up her hands.

Her neighbour's face shewed that the story interested and amused him.

"A Valkyrie, indeed! But how a feminist?"

"You shall hear. One evening she offered to give an address at the hotel on 'Women and the Future.' She was already of course regarded as half mad, and her opinions were well known. Some people objected, and spoke to the manager. Her father, it was said, tried to stop it, but she got her own way with him. And the manager finally decided that the advertisement would be greater than the risk. When the evening came the place was *bondé*; people came from every inn and pension round for miles. She spoke beautiful German, she had learnt it from a German governess who had brought her up, and been a second mother to her; and she hadn't a particle of *mauvaise honte*. Somebody had draped some Austrian and English flags behind her. The South Germans and Viennese, and Hungarians who came to listen—just the same kind of people who are here to-night—could hardly keep themselves on their chairs. The men laughed and stared—I heard a few brutalities—but they couldn't keep their eyes off her, and in the end they cheered her. Most of the women were shocked, and wished they hadn't come, or let their girls come. And the girls themselves sat open-mouthed—drinking it in."

"Amazing!" laughed the Englishman. "Wish I had been there! Was it an onslaught upon men?"

"Of course," said his companion coolly. "What else could it be? At present you men are the gaolers, and we the prisoners in revolt. This girl talked revolution—they all do. 'We women *intend* to have equal rights with you!—whatever it cost. And when we have got them we shall begin to fashion the world as *we* want it—and not as you men have kept it till now. *Gare à vous!* You have enslaved us for ages—you may enslave us a good while yet—but the end is certain. There is a new age coming, and it will be the age of the free woman!'—That was the kind of thing. I daresay it sounds absurd to you—but as she put it—as she looked it—I can tell you, it was fine!"

The small, work-worn hands of the Swedish lady shook on her knee. Her eyes seemed to hold the Englishman at bay. Then she added, in another tone.

"Some people of course walked out, and afterwards there were many complaints from fathers of families that their daughters should have been exposed to such a thing. But it all passed over."

"And the young lady went back to the forest?"

"Yes,—for a time."

"And what became of the black mare?"

"Its mistress gave her to an inn-keeper here when she left. But the first time he went to see the horse in the stable, she trampled on him and he was laid up for weeks."

"Like mistress, like mare?—Excuse the jest! But now, may I know the name of the prophetess?"

"She was a Miss Blanchflower," said the Swedish lady, boggling a little over the name. "Her father had been a governor of one of your colonies."

Winnington started forward in his chair.

"Good heavens!—you don't mean a daughter of old Bob Blanchflower!"

"Her father's name was Sir Robert Blanchflower."

The tanned face beside her expressed the liveliest interest.

"Why, I knew Blanchflower quite well. I met him long ago when I was staying with an uncle in India — at a station in the Bombay presidency. He was Major Blanchflower then" —

The speaker's brow furrowed a little as though under the stress of some sudden recollection, and he seemed to check himself in what he was saying. But in a moment he resumed: —

"A little after that he left the army, and went into Parliament. And — precisely! — after a few years they made him governor somewhere — not much of a post. Then last year his old father, a neighbour of mine in Hampshire, quite close to my little place, went and died, and Blanchflower came into a fortune and a good deal of land besides. And I remember hearing that he had thrown up the Colonial Service, had broken down in health, and was living abroad for some years to avoid the English climate. That's the man of course. And the Valkyrie is Blanchflower's daughter! Very odd that! I must have seen her as a child. Her mother" — he paused again slightly — "was a Greek by birth, and gloriously handsome. Blanchflower met her when he was military attaché at Athens for a short time. — Well, that's all very interesting!"

And in a ruminating mood the Englishman took out his cigarette-case.

"You smoke, Madame?"

The Swedish lady quietly accepted the courtesy. And while the too insistent band paused between one murdered Wagnerian fragment and another, they continued a conversation which seemed to amuse them both.

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A little later the Englishman went out into the garden of the hotel, meaning to start for a walk. But he espied a party of young people gathered about the new lawn-tennis court where instead of the languid and dishevelled trifling, with a broken net and a wretched court, that was once supposed to attract English visitors, he had been already astonished to find Austrians and Hungarians — both girls and boys — playing a game quite up to the average of a good

English club. The growing athleticism and independence, indeed, of the foreign girl, struck, for Winnington, the note of change in this mid-European spectacle more clearly than anything else. It was some ten years since he had been abroad in August, a month he had been always accustomed to spend in Scotch visits; and these young girls, with whom the Tyrol seemed to swarm, of all European nationalities other than English, still in or just out of the schoolroom; hatless and fearless; with their knapsacks on their backs, sometimes with ice-axes in their hands; climbing peaks and passes with their fathers and brothers; playing lawn-tennis like young men, and shewing their shapely forms sometimes, when it was a question of attacking the heights, in knicker-bocker costume, and at other times in fresh white dresses and bright-coloured jerseys, without a hint of waist; these young Atalantas, budding and bloomed, made the strongest impression upon him, as of a new race. Where had he been all these years? He felt himself a kind of Rip van Winkle—face to face at forty-one with a generation unknown to him. No one of course could live in England, and not be aware of the change which has passed over English girls in the same direction. But the Englishman always tacitly assumes that the foreigner is far behind him in all matters of open-air sport and physical development. Winnington had soon confessed the touch of national arrogance in his own surprise; and was now the keen and much attracted spectator.

On one of the grounds he saw the little German girl—Euphrosyne, as he had already dubbed her—having a lesson from a bullying elder brother. The youth, amazed at his own condescension, scolded his sister perpetually, and at last gave her up in despair, vowing that she would never be any good, and he was not going to waste his time in teaching such a ninny. Euphrosyne sat down beside the court, with tears in her pretty eyes, her white feet crossed, her dark head drooping; and two girl companions, aged about sixteen or seventeen, like herself, came up to comfort her.

"I could soon shew you how to improve your service, Mademoiselle," said Winnington, smiling, as he passed her. Euphrosyne looked up startled, but at sight of the handsome middle-aged Englishman, whom she unkindly judged to be not much younger than her father, she timidly replied:—

"It is hateful, Monsieur, to be so stupid as I am!"

"Let me shew you," repeated Winnington, kindly. At this moment, a vigilant English governess—speaking with a strong Irish-American accent—came up, and after a glance at the Englishman, smilingly acquiesced. The two comforters of Euphrosyne, graceful little maids, with cherry-coloured jerseys over their white frocks, and golden brown hair tied with the large black bows of the *Back-fisch*, were eager to share the lesson, and soon Winnington found himself the centre of a whole bevy of boys and girls who had run up to watch Euphrosyne's performance.

The English governess, a good girl, in spite of her accent, and the unconscious fraud she was thereby perpetrating on her employers, thought she had seldom witnessed a more agreeable scene.

"He treats them like princesses, and yet he makes them learn," she thought, a comment which very fairly expressed the mixture of something courtly with something masterful in the Englishman's manner. He was patience itself; but he was also frankness itself, whether for praise or blame; and the eagerness to please him grew fast and visibly in all these young creatures.

But as soon as he had brought back Euphrosyne's smiles, and roused a new and fierce ambition to excel in all their young breasts, he dropped the lesson, with a few gay slangy words, and went his way, leaving a stir behind him of which he was quite unconscious. And there was no Englishman looking on who might have told the charmed and conquered maidens that they had just been coached by one of the most famous of English athletes, born with a natural genius for every kind of game, from cricket downwards.

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On his way to the eastern side of the pass on which stood the group of hotels, Winnington got his post from the *concierge*, including his nightly *Times*, and carried it with him to a seat with which he was already familiar.

But he left the *Times* unopened, for the spectacle before him was one to ravish the senses from everything but itself. He looked across the deep valley of the Adige, nearly four thousand feet below him, to the giant range of the Dolomite Alps on the eastern side. The

shadow of the forest-clad mountain on which he stood spread downwards over the plain, and crept up the mountains on the farther edge. Above a gulf of deepest blue, inlaid with the green of vineyards and forest lakes, he beheld an aerial world of rose-colour—the giant Dolomites, Latemar, Rosengarten, Schlern—majestic rulers of an upper air, so pure and luminous, that every tiny shadow cast by every wisp of wandering cloud on the bare red peaks, was plainly visible across the thirty miles of space. Rosengarten, with its snowless, tempest-beaten crags, held the centre, flushing to its name; and to the right and left, peak ranged beyond peak, like courtiers crowding to their king; chief among them a vast pyramid, blood-red in the sunset, from which the whole side, it seemed, had been torn away, leaving a gash so fresh it might have been ripped by a storm of yesterday, yet older perhaps than Calvary....

The great show faded through every tone of delicate beauty to a starry twilight,—passion into calm. Winnington watched till it was done, still with the Keatsian tag in his mind, and that deep inner memory of loss, to which the vanished splendour of the mountains seemed to make a mystic answering. He was a romantic—some would have said a sentimental person, with a poet always in his pocket, and a hunger for all that might shield him from the worst uglinesses of life, and the worst despairs of thought; an optimist, and, in his own sense, Christian. He had come abroad to wander alone for a time, because as one of the busiest, most important and most popular men in a wide country-side, he had had a year of unceasing and strenuous work, with no time to himself; and it had suddenly been borne in upon him, in choosing between the Alps and Scotland, that a man must sometimes be alone, for his soul's health. And he had never relished the luxury of occasional solitude so sharply as on this pine-scented evening in Tyrol.

It was not till he was sitting again under the electric light of the hotel verandah that he opened his *Times*. The first paragraph which his eye lit upon was an obituary notice of Sir Robert Blanchflower "whose death, after a long illness and much suffering, occurred last week in Paris." The notice ended with the words—"the deceased baronet leaves a large property both in land and personalty. His only child, a daughter, Miss Delia Blanchflower, survives him."

Winnington laid down the paper. So the Valkyrie was now alone in the world, and mistress no doubt of all her father's wealth. "I must have seen her—I am sure there was a child about"; he said to himself again; and his thoughts went groping into a mostly forgotten past, and as he endeavoured to reconstruct it, the incident which had brought him for a few weeks into close relations with Robert Blanchflower, then Major Blanchflower of the—Dragoons, came at last vividly back to him.

An easy-going husband—a beautiful wife, not vicious, but bored to death—the inevitable third, in the person of a young and amorous cavalry officer—and a whole Indian station, waiting, half maliciously, half sadly, for the *banal* catastrophe:—it was thus he remembered the situation. Winnington had arrived on the scene as a barrister of some five years' standing, invalided after an acute attack of pneumonia, and the guest for the winter of his uncle, then Commissioner of the district. He discovered in the cavalry officer a fellow who had been his particular protégé at Eton, and had owed his passionately coveted choice for the Eleven largely to Winnington's good word. The whole dismal little drama unveiled itself, and Winnington was hotly moved by the waste and pity of it. He was entertained by the Blanchflowers and took a liking to them both. The old friendship between Winnington and the cavalryman was soon noticed by Major Blanchflower, and one night he walked home with Winnington, who had been dining at his house, to the Commissioner's quarters. Then, for the first time, Winnington realised what it may be to wrestle with a man in torment. The next day, the young cavalryman, at Winnington's invitation, took his old friend for a ride, and before dawn on the following day, the youth was off on leave, and neither Major nor Mrs. Blanchflower, Winnington believed, had ever seen him again. What he did with the youth, and how he did it, he cannot exactly remember, but at least he doesn't forget the grip of Blanchflower's hand, and the look of deliverance in his strained, hollow face. Nor had Mrs. Blanchflower borne her rescuer any grudge. He had parted from her on the best of terms, and the recollection of her astonishing beauty grows strong in him as he thinks of her.

So now it is her daughter who is stirring the world! With her father's money and her mother's eyes,—not to speak of the additional

trifles—eloquence, enthusiasm, &c.—thrown in by the Swedish woman, she ought to find it easy.

The dressing-gong of the hotel disturbed a rather sleepy reverie, and sent the Englishman back to his *Times*. And a few hours later he went to a dreamless bed, little guessing at the letter which was even then waiting for him, far below, in the Botzen post-office.