

I listened to gain information if possible; but they knew no more than everybody else knew. They had heard all about it, and were inflated with wonder.

One—an old farmer—asked me if I knew anything of the robber. I told him that I knew but little of the affair in any way, having been sick, and unable to be out among folks. Then he asked my consumptive friend if he knew anything about it. The latter raised his head from its reclining position, and was upon the point of answering, when we heard our driver, in quick, abrupt tones, ordering some one to get out of the road. I instinctively put my head out at the window to see what the trouble was, and my eye was just quick enough to detect a load of fagots in time to dodge back and avoid them. The road was quite narrow at this point, and as the fagots were loaded very widely, it was impossible for the driver wholly to avoid them, and the side of the coach was swept by them quite smartly. I escaped without being touched, but not so my friend. I heard an exclamation—I thought rather a profane one—from his lips, and on looking towards him I saw that one of the fagots had struck him over the left eye, making quite a mark upon the pale skin.

"These fellows ought to be taken up for loading their fagots out so," said another of the passengers. "It'll do very well to load hay out wide, for that won't hurt nobody if it does hit 'em; but fagots is different."

This turned the conversation from the subject of the robberies, and it was not alluded to again during the day.

We reached Lowstone shortly after dark, and I went at once to the residence of Mr. Stickney, whom I found at home. He had been out all day, and had made all sorts of efforts to obtain some clue to the perpetrators of the robberies that were being committed, but without effect.

"I can learn nothing," he said, "upon which to hang a suspicion. Two shops have been robbed in this place, but not a clue can I gain to the perpetrators. They must be old birds."

"Have you seen Gamblit?" I asked. Gamblit was the officer at Orton, a town twelve miles distant.

"Not lately," replied Stickney.

"He has been at work?" I suggested.

"Yes—I am sure of it."

"Then," said I, "we will go over in the morning to Orton, and with Gamblit in company we may be able to perfect some arrangement for pursuing this investigation to better advantage."

This met the views of my host, and so we left the matter for the evening. On the following morning we were up early, and as the coach would take us directly to Gamblit's house, we chose that mode of conveyance, and repaired at a seasonable hour to the tavern for that purpose. When we reached the inn we found the old farmer, who had been one of my fellow-passengers on the night before, stepping about the doorway in a high state of excitement. He had been robbed of three hundred pounds, and he was sure it must have been done in the stage-coach, for he had slept with his pocket-book under his pillow. He had not thought to look into it when he retired, but he had found it empty that morning when he got up. He said the wallet had been taken from his pocket and put back again—he knew it. As soon as he saw me he was anxious that I should be searched. I allowed him to perform the operation, and then I told him who I was, and informed him of my business.

"But," said I, "where is the pale, consumptive man, who came in with us?"

"He went away last night," answered the landlord, who stood near.

My first aim was to satisfy myself that the old man had been robbed in the stage-coach, and of this he succeeded in convincing me. After this my suspicions rested upon the consumptive man, and I believed, if I could find him, I should find a rogue. Should we go to Orton, or remain where we were? Stickney said, go to Orton first—get Gamblit—and then make up a programme for action. So I bade the landlord to keep a sharp look-out; and also spoke to the driver who had brought me from Sidney, and who was now on the point of returning; requesting him, if he saw anything of the pale man, to see that he was secured. The suspicious individual had only remained at the inn a few minutes on the previous evening, and had then gone away in a gig, which had come for him; but no one could tell what direction he had taken.

The coach for Orton soon came to the door, and Stickney and myself took our seats inside, the farmer having determined to remain where he

was until he heard something about his money. There were two other passengers inside, and two or three outside, but they were strangers to me. We had gone two or three miles, when the driver pulled up before a small farm-house, where a woman and a trunk were waiting by the garden gate. The lady was handed into the coach, and took a seat facing me, and as she turned to give the driver some direction concerning her baggage, she threw her veil over her bonnet. She was pretty—very pretty—with rosy cheeks, and sparkling eyes, and teeth that gleamed in their pure whiteness like pearls. Her hair hung in glossy brown ringlets over her neck and shoulders, and was a type of beauty in itself. I looked at the rosy cheeks again—and at the pearly teeth—and into her dark lustrous eyes. My gaze was fixed upon this latter point when she caught my glance, and quickly dropped her veil. At first I felt a little ashamed at having been caught in so rude an act as that of staring at her so boldly; but as the face was hidden from sight, and I had opportunity for reflection, it struck me that I had seen those features before.

Here was a study for me, and I was buried in it at once. Where had I seen that face? Was it possible that I had ever known that woman—one so lovely—and now forgotten her? I thought over all the intimate friends of my wife; but she was not to be found there. Then I thought over all the pretty girls I had known before I was married; but when I had called them all by name I remembered that the girl before me must have been a mere child when I was a single man. It was annoying—it made me provoked with myself—to think that I could not call this piece of female beauty to mind. I whispered to Stickney, and asked him if he had ever seen her before. He said he had not, and joked me for being so curious about a pretty face.

We stopped at a place called "Turner's Mills," in the edge of Orton, to exchange mails, and here I jumped out to see the post-master, who was an old friend of mine; and as I was returning to the coach the thought struck me to go and look at the trunk which had been left put on, and see if any name was on it. It was marked with the simple initials—"A. M." So that was all I gained from that source. As I came to the coach-door I approached it from behind, and as I cast my eyes up I found that the beauty had her veil raised, and was looking in at the post-office, as though anxious for the mail to come, that we might be off. The expression of anxiety detracted somewhat from her beauty, and as I looked upon her now, seeing her face in a different light, I was struck with a sort of snake-like cast which was perceptible in the whole character of her features. I was upon the point of withdrawing my gaze, lest she should catch me a second time, when a slight motion of her head rolled the curls over her temple, and I saw a faint line, something like a vein, over her left eye. It was a mark—a livid scratch—where something had struck her. It might have been the stroke of a whip. But—no; it quickly glided back behind the coach, and there I reflected. Such a mark as that could be made by a whip, but I was sure that THAT mark had been made by a fagot!

When I returned to my seat in the coach the fair passenger's veil was down again. Could it be possible that my suspicions were correct, and that chance had thus thrown in my way a solution of the problem which had vexed my deputies so much? Yes, I was sure of it; and the more I compared the two faces in my mind, the more I saw the resemblance. Either these cheeks were painted red to-day or they had been painted white yesterday. The eyes were the same—the contour the same—and that brow, with its tell-tale mark, not to be mistaken.

"What's the matter?" asked Stickney.

"I feel chilly," I replied. "I'm afraid I've caught more cold."

"Never mind. Here we are; a dose of something warm will help you."

As Stickney spoke, we stopped at the door of the inn at Orton. The driver announced that they would stop there fifteen or twenty minutes, to exchange horses and wait for the mail, and also informed the passengers that they would find plenty of accommodation in the house if they chose to go in.

"Will you step in, ma'am?" he added to my beauty.

She said she would; and he helped her out, and conducted her to a private sitting-room.

"Stickney," said I, "I'm going to find out who that woman is."

"Nonsense!" said he.

"I think I've got the scent."

"Eh?"

"I rode with her yesterday."

"With her?"

"It was a HIM then!"

"She—"

"Don't waste time in talking, but do you stand here by the door, and pop in the moment you hear anything to warrant it."

I left my deputy in a state of perfect wonderment, and entered the sitting-room. The beauty was sitting by a window, gazing out between the blinds. She started up as I entered, and let her veil fall.

"I thought this was a private room, sir," she said. Her voice trembled and sounded unnatural.

"It may be," I returned; "but that does not exclude those who have business. I came on purpose to see you."

There was a momentary struggle, and then she appeared as calm as could be.

"What are you?" she asked.

"I am an officer of Bow-street," I replied.

"And what do you want with me?"

"I want to know who you are."

"Stop—one moment," she said; and as she spoke she carried her hand beneath her cloak. It was quickly withdrawn, and in it was a pistol, but she had grasped a portion of her dress with it, and before she could clear it, I had sprung upon her and seized her by the arms. But it was a *her* no longer. There was more muscle in that slight body than I had bargained for! However, my man "popped" in the moment he heard the scuffle, and the beauty was soon secured. The glossy brown tresses fell off during the scuffle, and some of the paint was removed from the cheeks.

As soon as the prisoner was secured I had his trunk taken off and brought in, and upon overhauling its contents we found disguises of all sorts, and quite a sum of money, besides watches and jewellery of much value. I made him assume a proper male attire, and when he stood forth, *in propria persona*, I found that he had not only used red paint for the blushing beauty of to-day, but that he had applied a more cadaverous colouring matter for the consumptive individual of yesterday. As he stood now, he was a lithe-built, intelligent looking youth, of not more than five-and-twenty; but with a cold-blooded expression upon his marble face, and an evil look in his dark eyes.

We carried him back to Lowstone, where we found the money of the old farmer upon him, besides other money which had been lost by different individuals. At first he told strange stories of himself, but finally, when he knew that the worst must come, he confessed the whole. He was from London, and had come into the country on purpose to rob. He had had two confederates with him, who had helped him from place to place. One of them had taken him away from the inn on the night before, and the other had brought him and set him down at the farmer's garden gate that morning. We made search for these confederates, but they had got wind of their principal's arrest, and were not to be found.

However, we had got the chief sinner, and broken up the game. After he had been found guilty, and sentenced, he seemed to enjoy himself hugely in telling how he had deceived the good people of our county. Now he would turn himself again into the old woman, who had given the driver so much trouble after her hand-box. Then he would be again the meek-browed minister, who had distributed tracts to the passengers, and picked their pockets while they read. Then he would draw himself up into the little hump-backed old man, who had been lifted into and out of the coach, and robbed his helpers while they fixed his crutches for him. It was funny—very—and perhaps we might never have caught him but for the accident of the fagots. That was not so funny for him; and I doubt if he found much fun in working at our hard stone—hammering, hammering—early and late—with an inexorable master over him to spur him up when he lagged.

TRAUBACH, ON THE MOSELLE.

DURING the touring season the continent of Europe possesses an interest for the English traveller which it does not offer at any other time. Those of us who have neither means nor leisure to wander further than our own coasts, must content ourselves with sands and sea-breezes, but to those who can conveniently do so, the shadowy outline of the French coast presents a very inviting aspect, and we are tempted to cross the Channel and visit some of those places which may have the most attraction for us. Thousands and tens of thousands hasten to Paris, Baden, Brussels, and go up the Rhine; but comparatively few select for themselves their place



VIEW OF TRAUBACH, RHENISH PRUSSIA.

of destination. The tourists are gregarious; they are led or misled by guides and handbooks into imagining that they have seen a country and learned something of its people, when they have only observed those things which are specially prepared for English travellers; and they seldom think it worth while to turn out of the beaten path and

to grow familiar with continental places, *au naturel*. Supposing, for example, somebody, instead of going up the Rhine, was to make an excursion up the Moselle, or was to trace it from its cradle in the rocky fastnesses of the Vosges mountains to its meeting with the Rhine at Coblenz, there would be much to interest the traveller, and to reward him for

interest for the antiquary, as well as the artist and tourist.

Throughout the whole course of the river the scenery on either shore is diversified and picturesque, and those who have once visited the spot recall with pleasure the days which were spent "on the banks of the blue Moselle."

his trouble, while the lustre of novelty would impart attractions even to localities the most common-place.

The entire course of the Moselle is estimated at about three hundred miles, nearly one hundred miles longer than that of the Thames. Its average width is about five hundred feet, and for about half of its course it is navigable. The ordinary rate of its current is one mile and a half in the hour. As a channel of internal communication, it is exceedingly valuable, traversing the French departments, Vosges, Meurthe, and Moselle, before entering the Prussian dominions, and conveying large quantities of timber, slates, charcoal, &c., to the Rhine.

The banks of the Moselle present some highly picturesque scenery, and boast of several places of interest. Amongst these are—Epinal, with its ruined castle and Gothic church overlooking the mountain waterfalls made by the course of the stream; Toul, of old a free city of Germany, not definitively added to France till the commencement of the sixteenth century; Metz, with its strong fortress, the central French defence on the German frontier, its military hospital, capable of containing 1,500 patients, its extensive barracks and schools for the application and practice of engineering and artillery; Thionville, another formidable fortress, planned by the military genius of Vauban; Trèves, the most ancient and most celebrated of German cities; Traubach (represented in our engraving), and Coblenz, beautifully situated on the point of land at the confluence of the Moselle with the Rhine.

Traubach is a small town of Rhenish Prussia, situated in a fertile valley, and overlooked by hills clothed with vineyards and timber. The old walls of the town and the ruins of the ancient castle of Grafenburg, add picturesque beauty and romantic interest to the locality.

Grafenburg was built in the fourteenth century, by the Countess Lauretta of Salon, widow of Count Henry II. of Sponheim. During the thirty years' war it was occupied in turns by the Spaniards, the French, and the Swedes; in 1687, the French erected some additional fortifications and repaired the old walls. Subsequently it fell into the hands of the Imperialists, and is now attached to the Prussian dominions.

In the church of Traubach are several curious monuments, and the town itself is not without interest for the antiquary, as well as the artist and