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BRITISH AUTHORS  
TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

VOL. 1104.

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MAN AND WIFE.

A NOVEL.

BY

WILKIE COLLINS.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1870.

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Adaptation has been secured by the Author.]*

## MAN AND WIFE.

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### CHAPTER XXI.

In it.

"Now," said Sir Patrick, "what is the question?"

"The question," said Geoffrey, "is whether my friend is married to her or not?"

"Did he mean to marry her?"

"No."

"He being a single man, and she being a single woman, at the time? And both in Scotland?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Now tell me the circumstances."

Geoffrey hesitated. The art of stating circumstances, implies the cultivation of a very rare gift—the gift of arranging ideas. No one was better acquainted with this truth than Sir Patrick. He was purposely puzzling Geoffrey at starting, under the firm conviction that his client had something to conceal from him. The one process that could be depended on for extracting the truth, under those circumstances, was the process of interrogation. If Geoffrey was submitted to it, at the outset, his cunning might take the alarm. Sir Patrick's object was to make the man himself invite interrogation. Geoffrey invited it forthwith, by attempting to

state the circumstances, and by involving them in the usual confusion. Sir Patrick waited until he had thoroughly lost the thread of his narrative—and then played for the winning trick.

"Would it be easier to you if I asked a few questions?" he inquired, innocently.

"Much easier."

"I am quite at your service. Suppose we clear the ground to begin with? Are you at liberty to mention names?"

"No."

"Places?"

"No."

"Dates?"

"Do you want me to be particular?"

"Be as particular as you can."

"Will it do if I say the present year?"

"Yes. Were your friend and the lady—at some time in the present year—travelling together in Scotland?"

"No."

"Living together in Scotland?"

"No."

"What *were* they doing together in Scotland?"

"Well—they were meeting each other at an inn."

"Oh? They were meeting each other at an inn. Which was first at the rendezvous?"

"The woman was first. Stop a bit! We are getting to it now." He produced from his pocket the written memorandum of Arnold's proceedings at Craig Fernie, which he had taken down from Arnold's own lips. "I've got a bit of a note here," he went on. "Perhaps, you'd like to have a look at it."